



BEATRIX POTTER'S GARDENING LIFE

*The plants and places
that inspired the classic
children's tales*

MARTA McDOWELL



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Beatrix Potter on holiday at Holehird, Windermere, 1889

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Guinea pigs gardening from *Cecily Parsley's Nursery Rhymes*

For Kirke



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THE FLOWERS LOVE the house, they try to come in. The golden flowered great St. Johns wort pushes up between the flags in the porch, it has peeped up between the skirting and the flags inside the porch place before now. And the old lilac bush that blew down had its roots under the parlour floor, when they lifted the boards. Houseleek grows on the window sills and ledges; wisteria climbs the wall; clematis chokes the spout's casings. Wall flowers and cabbage roses in season; rosemary and blue gentian, and earliest to flower the red pyrus Japanese quince—but nothing more sweet than the old pink cabbage rose that peeps in at the small paned windows.

—Beatrix Potter's description of Hill Top, part of an unpublished sequel to *The Fairy Caravan*

PREFACE



FIRST, A CONFESSION. I did not read Beatrix Potter as a child. In fact, I learned about Peter Rabbit from a knockoff of sorts. The spoiled youngest of four, I would steadily pester my mother for books on outings to Woolworths, and one day she bought me a shiny-covered Golden Book called *Little Peter Cottontail* by Thornton W. Burgess. Its naughty rabbit cavorted in wildflowers and visited a farm, but never found Mr. McGregor's garden. My introduction to Beatrix Potter came much later in life.

In 1981, at a shower celebrating my upcoming nuptials, someone gave me a large cookie jar in the shape of a bonneted, apron-bedecked "porcupine" holding an iron. Wedding showers are awkward at best, particularly for learning about famous characters from childhood literature that one has somehow, in two-plus decades of life, managed to miss. What did I say when opening this gift in front of a sizeable, entirely female audience of friends, family, and future relations? That memory is lost. I have also repressed the identity of the gift-giver. Neither the Mrs. Tiggy-winkle cookie jar (a hedgehog, if you please) nor the marriage lasted long.

Fast-forward to 1997, when I set off with my second (and last) husband and two aged parents for a tour of Scotland and the Lake District. William Wordsworth was on our agenda. His homes, Dove Cottage and Rydal Mount, are both near Grasmere and not far from Windermere, where we were staying. And what of Beatrix Potter, that children's author and artist?

Our visit to Hill Top Farm, Miss Potter's beloved home on the other side of Windermere, turned out to be a highlight. For one thing, the sun came out that afternoon after a week of Scotland in the rain. (My mother, who had brought only one pair of shoes—my father would blow-dry them for her every night in our B&B—was especially grateful.) The Hill Top garden was at its August peak; the tour was engaging.

I learned that day that Beatrix Potter was a gardener. I garden, though some days I feel that I do most of my gardening at the

keyboard. I am intrigued by writers who garden and by gardeners who write. The pen and the trowel are not interchangeable, but seem often linked. Emily Dickinson, poet and gardener, has long been an obsession of mine. Edith Wharton interests me, and Jane Austen, both novelists with a gardening bent. I once read all of Nathaniel Hawthorne, winnowing his words for horticultural references. Gertrude Jekyll and Vita Sackville-West also oblige. And now there was Beatrix Potter.



A rabbit sets off to garden, later adapted for *Peter Rabbit's Almanac* for 1929

So Beatrix Potter and the idea of her garden simmered quietly at the back of my mind. Over the years I saw some of Potter's marvelous botanical watercolors at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London

and the Morgan Library & Museum in New York. *Miss Potter*, a Hollywood film, came and went. An adroit article by Peter Parker appeared in the gardening journal *Hortus*. But one day at the New York Botanical Garden shop, two books lay side by side on a display table: a new edition of Potter's *The Complete Tales* and Linda Lear's biography, *Beatrix Potter: A Life in Nature*. The simmer turned to a boil.

A few explanatory notes. You may be relieved or perturbed, depending on your druthers, that I have avoided botanical names in most of the book. Beatrix was not impressed with gardener's Latin, so I have bowed to her feelings on the matter. For those of you who are looking for these particulars, you will find lists of the plants she grew, wrote about, and illustrated, including their proper nomenclature, at the end of the book. Her grammar, punctuation, and spelling were loose, particularly in her letters, but they are reproduced as she wrote them. I would encourage you to have copies of her *Tales* at hand. The stories with their illustrations are a joy to read. They will increase your understanding of both Beatrix Potter and her gardens.

Part One is a gardener's biography of Beatrix Potter. In terms of her own name, I must beg her pardon on two counts. First, for taking the liberty of referring to her by her Christian name, I plead twenty-first-century customs. Second, during her married years I have generally stuck to her maiden name rather than switching to her preferred "Mrs. Heelis." As she continued to use Potter professionally throughout her life, she would, I think, understand that it is by that name that we continue to know her best.

Part Two follows Beatrix Potter through a year in her gardens. When she lived with her husband at Castle Cottage, it is not always clear whether she and her correspondents are discussing the garden there or across the road at Hill Top Farm. So in describing the progress of her gardens through the seasons I hope I will be forgiven for smudging the lines a bit, as her efforts and enjoyment encompassed both.

Part Three is a traveler's guide, intended as a lure to discover or rediscover Beatrix Potter's Lake District and the other parts of Great Britain that influenced her. The gardens at Hill Top Farm alone would merit a visit, and there are many other gardens and landscapes that still have echoes of her.

Welcome to Beatrix Potter's gardens ...

PART ONE

**Beatrix Potter, Her Life as a
Gardener**





Beatrix Potter in the front porch at Hill Top Farm, 1913

EVERY GARDEN TELLS A STORY, if you know how to read it. The story of Beatrix Potter's garden begins on an October day in the village of Sawrey in the north of England.

A woman walks up a rise toward a farmhouse, tape measure in hand. She is small in stature, and some gray hairs are wound into her otherwise brown bun. Tiny lines around her mouth would fold into a smile, if there were one. It seems like happiness is not something she expects. She has just signed the contract for Hill Top Farm, her first property. Her blue eyes are wide, imagining the garden she will lay out, its walls and walks, and perhaps a long trellis like the one at her uncle's home in Wales.

Beatrix Potter can picture the garden built and full of flowers: snowdrops in the winter, a spring torrent of lilacs and azaleas and daffodils, summer covered with roses, chrysanthemums for autumn. Fruit trees are a must. A pear tree and some plums can go in with the old apples in the orchard, some currants and gooseberries with the flowers.

She should be happy, this Londoner, realizing the dream of a place of her own in the Lake District, yet an air of sadness clings to her, a hint of loss, like fog that refuses to burn off by midday. It is 1905. The garden beckons as a fresh beginning.

GERMINATION



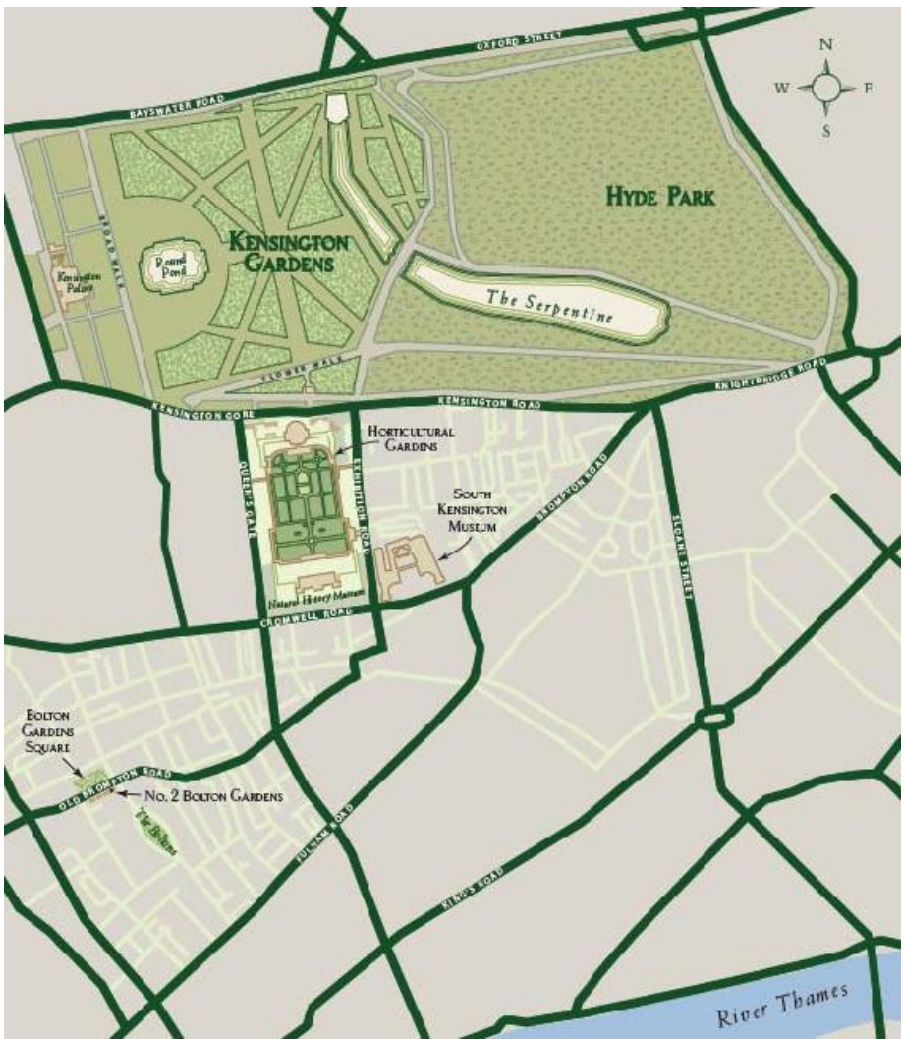
BEATRIX POTTER was a late bloomer, gardening-wise. By the time she saw the first growing season progress through her garden at Hill Top she would be forty years old. In spite of a somewhat late start, the seeds of Potter's gardening interests were planted early on.

On a Saturday in the height of summer, July 28, 1866, Beatrix Potter was born at No. 2 Bolton Gardens in London. Her parents, Helen Leech Potter and Rupert Potter, were among the recently rich, due in large part to fathers who had made fortunes in Manchester's cotton industry. The Potters had just purchased this, their first home, newly built in the leafy neighborhood of South Kensington.

Behind the stylish four-story terrace house, the back garden where Beatrix played as a child was a low-key affair. It was walled to lend privacy and gated for access. A few small trees cast shade. A gravel path surrounded a central rectangular lawn. Between the path and the wall grew a simple bed of shrubs like laurel and aucuba along with a smattering of groundcovers. Hyacinths bloomed there in the spring, their fat, colorful spikes pumping out perfume. Brick set in a sawtooth pattern edged the bed. A rose was trained on the wall along with an assortment of climbing vines.



Beatrix Potter at a garden gate, about 1871



Beatrix Potter's London

Across the street from No. 2 was a pocket park, a garden square exclusive to residents. To attract affluent buyers, London residential developers as early as the seventeenth century started offering a private park as an amenity. By the Potters' day such parks were must-have features for the fashionable. It was a bit of country in the city, *rus in urbe*. As was usual, the Potters paid for the privilege of the park. A garden tax covered their share of its upkeep. In exchange, they received a key to its iron gate. Young Beatrix, under the authority of Nurse MacKenzie, knew its shaded walks, winding through shrubberies, around lawns, and alongside flowerbeds.

Beatrix and her nurse continued their constitutions to the Royal Horticultural Society's Horticultural Gardens, a pinnacle of Victorian prowess nestled next to the South Kensington Museum, now the

Victoria and Albert Museum. At Beatrix's child's-eye view, the intricate flowerbeds (changed seasonally to maintain peak bloom) stretched out in fans and curves of color. The large glass conservatory was warm and tropical in winter, a jungle to a young, imaginative girl. On concert days, musicians played from cast iron bandstands. A tiled arcade lent shade from the sun. The Potters' male heir, born when Beatrix was almost six, especially enjoyed the water features. "Once when Bertram was sailing his boat at the Horticultural Gardens," Beatrix remembered, "an elegant young man playing lawn tennis remarked to an elegant young lady, when the boat stuck in the reeds, that it reminded him of 'Moses in the Ark'." The Gardens were an appropriate venue for chaperoned children, a place where fashionable society strolled.



The square at Bolton Gardens, photographed by Rupert Potter, 1896

The Horticultural Gardens were just across from Kensington Gardens, another regular destination for Nurse MacKenzie and the children. One of London's Royal Parks, it was laid out during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in the then-popular Dutch style. Symmetry ruled. The great avenues of trees stretched radially from the formal Round Pond. A touch of English landscape style came into the garden with the natural-looking Serpentine, an artificial lake created by damming up Westbourne Stream. Young Beatrix and Bertram ambled among the gentry on the Broad Walk and explored the Flower Walk, playing under the watchful eye of Nurse MacKenzie.

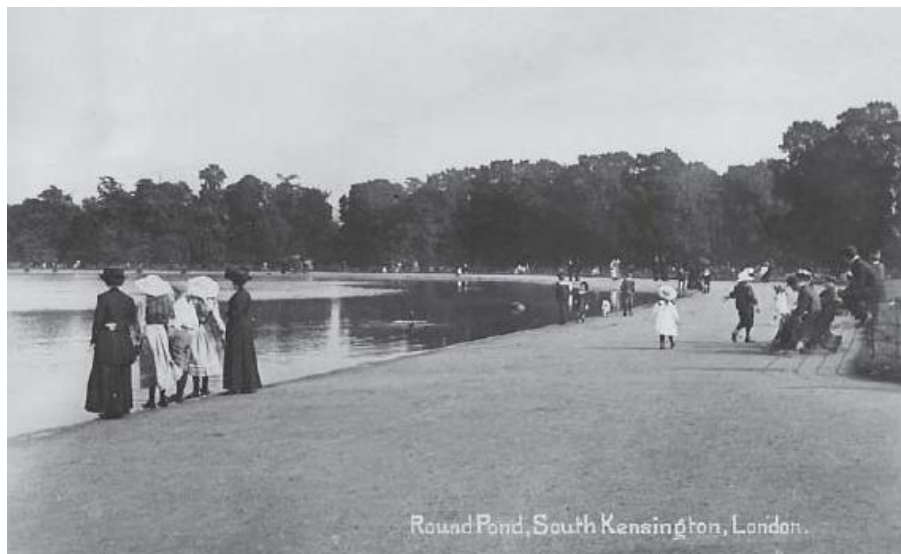
MacKenzie was the first in a series of minders, the Potters adopting this common childrearing practice for their social class. Governesses

taught Beatrix the basics—arithmetic and English, geography and map-drawing. A tutor came in for French. Her last governess, Miss Annie Carter, added German. Beatrix learned Latin. She enjoyed reading Virgil, so she had no problem with botanical names for plants later on, though in general she avoided them.



The gardens of the Royal Horticultural Society, South Kensington, photographed by York and Son, about 1871

A shy child, Beatrix found quiet affection among a menagerie including, at various times, mice, frogs, snails, lizards, birds, a dog, a hedgehog, a bat, and of course, rabbits. Some were authorized, some smuggled. In addition to pets, her parents indulged her, and later Bertram, in their artistic efforts. Beatrix Potter first gardened with her pencil and paintbrush.



Round Pond in Kensington Gardens, postcard, undated

With her father, Beatrix visited art galleries and the studio of his friend, successful society painter Sir John Everett Millais. Rupert Potter, an accomplished amateur photographer, shot sitters and landscape backgrounds for Millais, a great help to a painter who spent much of his time in the studio rather than *en plein air*. In later years Beatrix wrote, “When I was young it was still the fashion to admire Pre Raphaelites. Their meticulous copying of flowers & plants ... influenced me.” By age ten, her drawings of plants showed promise. She learned from books in the Potter library—copybooks by James Andrews and Vere Foster. She learned from art lessons, both private and through the South Kensington Art School. She learned by looking, on family holidays as well as in London.



Helen Beatrice Potter... Feb 9. 1876.

Foxglove and periwinkle, pencil, 1876



Beatrix and her mother, about 1872



Dalguish House, undated

Scotland, a regular Potter holiday destination, provides the first plant reference in family correspondence, appropriately referring to the first bloom of the year. Writing to his seven-year-old daughter from a winter trip, Rupert noted, “There are snowdrops on the lawn but the trees are all bare and no bunnies are to be seen.” The Potters spent eleven long holidays in Dalguish (pronounced dahl-guys), a manor house in the forested hills near Dunkeld on the western side of the broad River Tay. From 1871 to 1881, the family sojourned there for several months each year escaping the dust, not to mention health risks, of London summers. In contrast to Bolton Gardens, which Beatrix later described as “my unloved birthplace,” she remembered Dalguish as “beautiful, home sweet home.”

Beatrix was a country girl at heart. Dalguish was as quiet as London was bustling. The air was clean, unlike the sludgy, sulfurous air of the Victorian city. Light slanted in through forests carpeted with the soft needles of conifers, delighting a fanciful little girl. “The woods were peopled by the mysterious good folk,” she later wrote. “The Lords and Ladies of the last century walked with me along the overgrown paths.” Beatrix flourished at Dalguish.

Childhood discipline loosened. There were flowers to pick along the lanes and in the garden’s box-hedged beds. Beatrix remembered running to greet a favorite guest, William Gaskell, who was sitting comfortably on the front doorstep. “There are sounds of pounding footsteps,” she recalled. “The blue-bottles whizz off the path. A little

girl in a print dress and striped stockings bounds to his side and offers him a bunch of meadowsweet.” Hardly behavior that would have been allowed in London.

While the Potters brought their retinue of staff with them on their long holidays, there must have been a Dalguise gardener who worked at the house year-round. He would have been occupied tending the roses, clipping the hedges and, in summer, answering the questions of an inquisitive little girl. Her father photographed Beatrix and her governess in front of a carefully tended display of potted plants. While the gardener is invisible, his work is apparent—grooming, watering, and presenting the plants to their best advantage.



Beatrix and Bertram at Dalguise, about 1876



Beatrix with governess Miss Madeline Davidson at Dalguise, 1878

Beatrix made her own little gardens, fencing tiny enclosures and tending plants, pretend and real. They were important enough that her father took note of them when he wrote to her from a solo visit to Dalguise. “I went up to look at your pretence garden under the fir trees above the orchard & I am sorry to say that the cows had been trampling about & had knocked over the little palings which you left.”



Beatrix's father and grandfather on the terrace at Camfield Place, 1883

When not in London or Scotland, the Potters often visited Camfield Place, her paternal grandparents' home. Jessy Crompton Potter and Edmund Potter bought the three hundred-acre estate in rural Hertfordshire north of London the year Beatrix was born. To her, it had always been there. At Camfield "all is bound up together in fact and fancy, my dear grandmother, the place I love best in the world and the sweet balmy air where I have been so happy as a child."



View from the terrace at Camfield Place, watercolor, 1884

She could run in the garden, only returning when the fire bell was rung as the summons home. Great banks of rhododendrons bloomed in the spring, concealing a faux medieval grotto. A hollow but living elm was perfect to climb and explore for birds' nests. A yellow rose grew up the brick wall of the kitchen garden, along with the more tender fruit trees. Edmund Potter employed fifteen gardeners to manage the park, walled garden, ornamental beds, and greenhouses. The landscape of this childhood idyll acquainted the young Beatrix with the work of another artist, Capability Brown.

Lancelot "Call me Capability" Brown was England's supreme garden designer of the eighteenth century. Charming and affable, Brown was a landscape superstar who could exploit the "capabilities" of your country place. If England were a face, Capability Brown would have been its plastic surgeon. His nips and tucks involved extravagant earth moving: building hills, excavating vales, damming streams to create water features. He banished formal features, scraping allées and parterres alike. (All done in the pre-industrial era of manual labor and the original kind of horsepower.)

For his commissions, Brown would typically deliver an Arcadian lawn rolling out from the manor house as far as the eye could see. He painted with trees, planting them in wide belts, elegant clumps, and individual specimens. By the time Beatrix Potter played at Camfield, the trees had grown into mature plantings. The cedar of Lebanon was a particular favorite, "its branches resting on the ground, mixed up

with summer growth of wild parsley and coarse grass.” It must have made a wonderful childhood fort.

Taste in garden styles changes, but Beatrix later remembered Camfield Place, its trees and views, with fondness. She pronounced, “I believe it is the fashion to make game of Capability Brown, but, if this place is a fair example of his skill, I do not agree.” Beatrix Potter was never a slave to fashion.



Camfield's cedar, pen and ink, undated but later used in *The Fairy Caravan*

Beatrix developed her inner gardener on the three-legged stool of South Kensington, Dalguise, and Camfield Place. But in 1882, the year she turned sixteen, her father broke the news that he was unable to renew the lease for Dalguise. Swimming in the midst of adolescence Beatrix cried, “the memory of that home is the only bit of childhood I have left.” With the loss of Dalguise, she would look for a new balance.

OFFSHOOTS



IT WASN'T EASY being Beatrix Potter. She had the normal adolescent woes, compounded by chronic shyness. She was clumsy in company, once moaning, "I feel like a cow in a drawing room." While other girls her age, including her cousins, were charming in society, Beatrix was awkward. Bertram went off to boarding school. Beatrix was kept at home. She was prone to fainting spells and headaches. She complained of colds and bouts of influenza. Her health problems were capped by a serious case of rheumatic fever. Her mother was difficult, her father distracted. She was, in short, discontented.

She fought back with her paintbrush and her pen. "I cannot rest, I must draw, however poor the result, and when I have a bad time come over me it is a stronger desire than ever, and settles on the queerest things, worse than queer sometimes." She confessed, "I caught myself in the back yard making a careful and admiring copy of the swill bucket, and the laugh it gave me brought me round." She wrote these observations in her journal in a code she invented when she was fifteen years old.



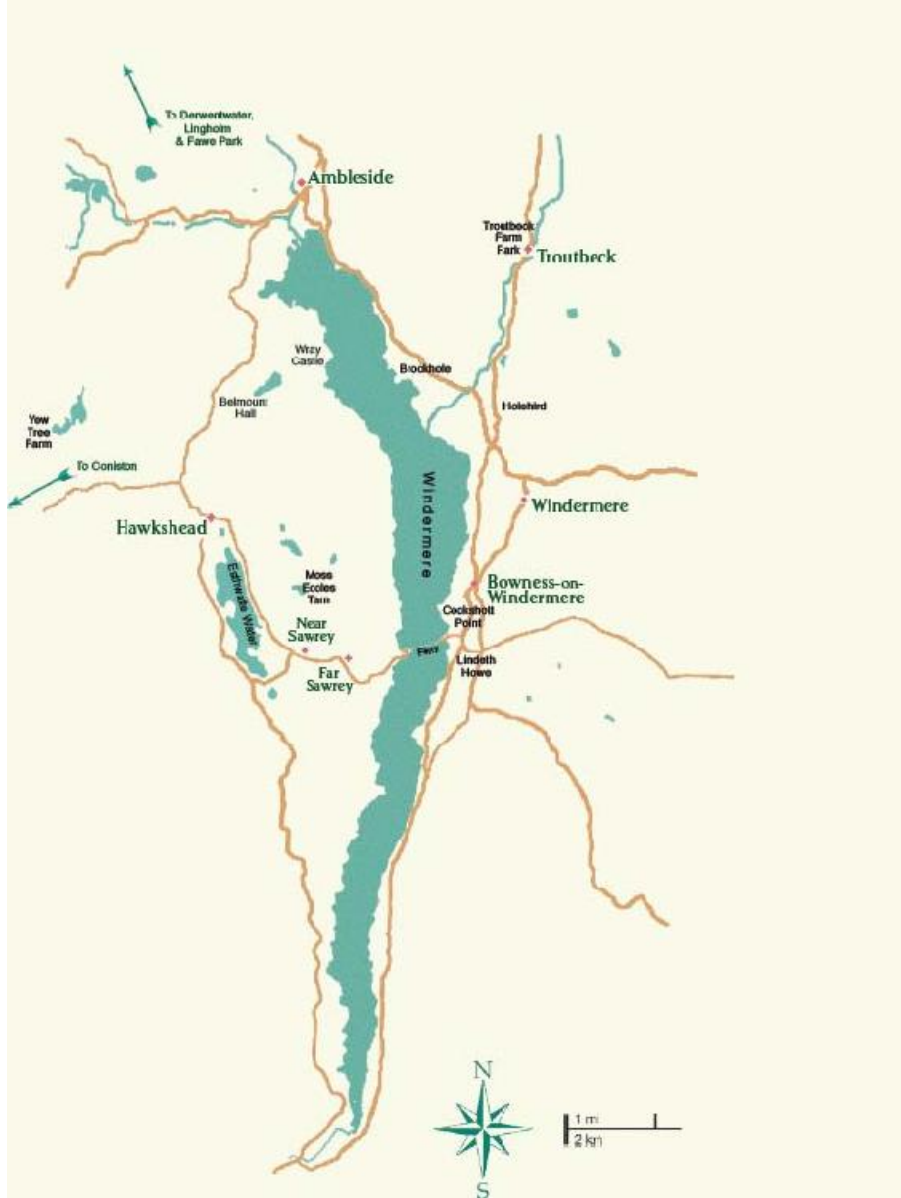
A study of a garden scene with cold frames, watercolor with pencil, undated

In her journal, she recorded a life of arrivals and departures. After more than ten years of long summers at Dalguise—holidays stretching for three to five months—over the next two decades the Potter family seemed almost to drift among a selection of summer homes. They sampled five different places in the Lake District. Some years they took houses in Hertfordshire, near her aging grandparents at Camfield Place. Nor did Rupert abandon Scotland—he rented other properties in and around Dunkeld. Add to this at least one seaside trip for several weeks each spring to allow a top-to-bottom cleaning of London’s soot and grime from No. 2 Bolton Gardens, and one is left with a sense of Beatrix’s rootlessness.

Rupert Potter chose the Lake District the first year Dalguise was unavailable. It had some obvious appeals. There were similarities to Scotland: weather (wet) and upland scenery (sublime), not to mention excellent fishing. It was a popular destination. Other London and Manchester families summered there, giving it the social imprimatur. A great-grandfather on the Crompton side had once owned property in the Southern Lakes near Coniston Water.



Beatrix, hair shorn during a bout of rheumatic fever, with her pet dormouse, Xarifa, 1885



Beatrix Potter's Lakes



The Potters including spaniel, Spot, at Wray Castle, 1882

When Beatrix and her parents, her brother, assorted pets, and staff emerged from the train station at Windermere, they proceeded to Wray Castle on the far shore of the lake. Unlike the staid classical façades of Bolton Gardens and Dalguise, Wray Castle was a neo-Gothic concoction built in the 1840s, complete with crenelated towers and picturesque garden.



Rupert and Beatrix Potter (far left and far right) with Edith Rawnsley, Reverend Hardwicke Rawnsley, and their son Noel, 1887

The summer at Wray was Beatrix's initiation into country life in the Lakes. One Saturday in August, she headed out on a solo walk to Hawkshead, the closest market town about two miles away. In her journal she recorded, "Had a series of adventures. Inquired the way three times, lost continually, alarmed by colliers at every farm, stuck in stiles, chased once by cows." Her misadventures introduced her to the land and its smallholdings with their patchwork of enclosed pastures, hayfields, and gray farmhouses. The lanes were bounded with stacked slate walls and hedgerows, where public paths, those ancient rights-of-way, often required a stile, a purpose-built ladder, to cross over a wall. Sometimes the footpaths cut across unmarked pastures, and it was a toss-up whether the walker or the ruminants were more surprised by the encounters.



Approaching Hawkshead, watercolor with pencil, undated

The Reverend Mr. Rawnsley, the Potters' neighbor at Wray and canon of the local church, would have encouraged her walks. Public footpaths were among his many advocacies. Hardwicke Rawnsley was a man of words and action. He erupted with enthusiasm, and to shy, teenaged Beatrix he must have been pure pleasure. He and his wife, Edith, became friends with the Potters on that visit and remained so for the rest of their lives. One of his passions was large scale: the preservation of the landscape of Lakes. As President of the Lake District Defence Society and later a co-founder of the National Trust, he was tenacious. He once wrote in a visitor book: "He came and pleaded till he bust; The sacred cause of National Trust." His sacred cause would eventually become hers.

In the course of the familial peregrinations, Beatrix Potter began to appreciate gardens in a new way. Her father taught her the basics of photography and gave her a camera. Among her exposures and his are many landscapes and designed outdoor spaces. In Salisbury she admired the Cathedral Close, "with its fine elms, green meadows and old red-brick houses in gardens where the *Ribes* and *Pyrus japonica* are coming into flower." Years later she would plant gooseberries and currants, both *Ribes*, and japonica in her own garden. Beatrix admired the wrought iron gates and a sundial inscribed "life's but a walking shadow." She also made note of their lunch at the White Hart where "the cooking is not so handsome as the bill."

She began to focus a critical eye on the gardens she visited. Describing a valley garden on the Cornish coast, she wrote, "It is the most successful and striking piece of landscape-gardening I ever met

with, but struck me as being almost too picturesque.” She was intrigued by the tropical plants, tree ferns and the like, but felt they were “rather out of place in an old English garden. There is nothing like a box-border and the scent of wall-flower and polyanthus over a snug brick wall.”

Her travels also brought on a more serious study of plants. She referred to Sowerby’s *British Wild Flowers*, a gift from Grandmother Potter. She recorded encounters with plants. On one trip she itemized sea pinks, a dwarf creeping willow, and a spotted-leaved orchid. She noted their locations. She compared different sites. “With regard to ferns, further inland it is equal to Devonshire in profusion of all the commoner sorts.” She found a rare plant blooming late for its season, recording, “The boggy ground was literally dry, and I waded through the sweet bog myrtle to look for the long-leaved sundew, which I remembered covering the black peat like a crimson carpet.”



Black currants, watercolor with pen and ink, about 1905



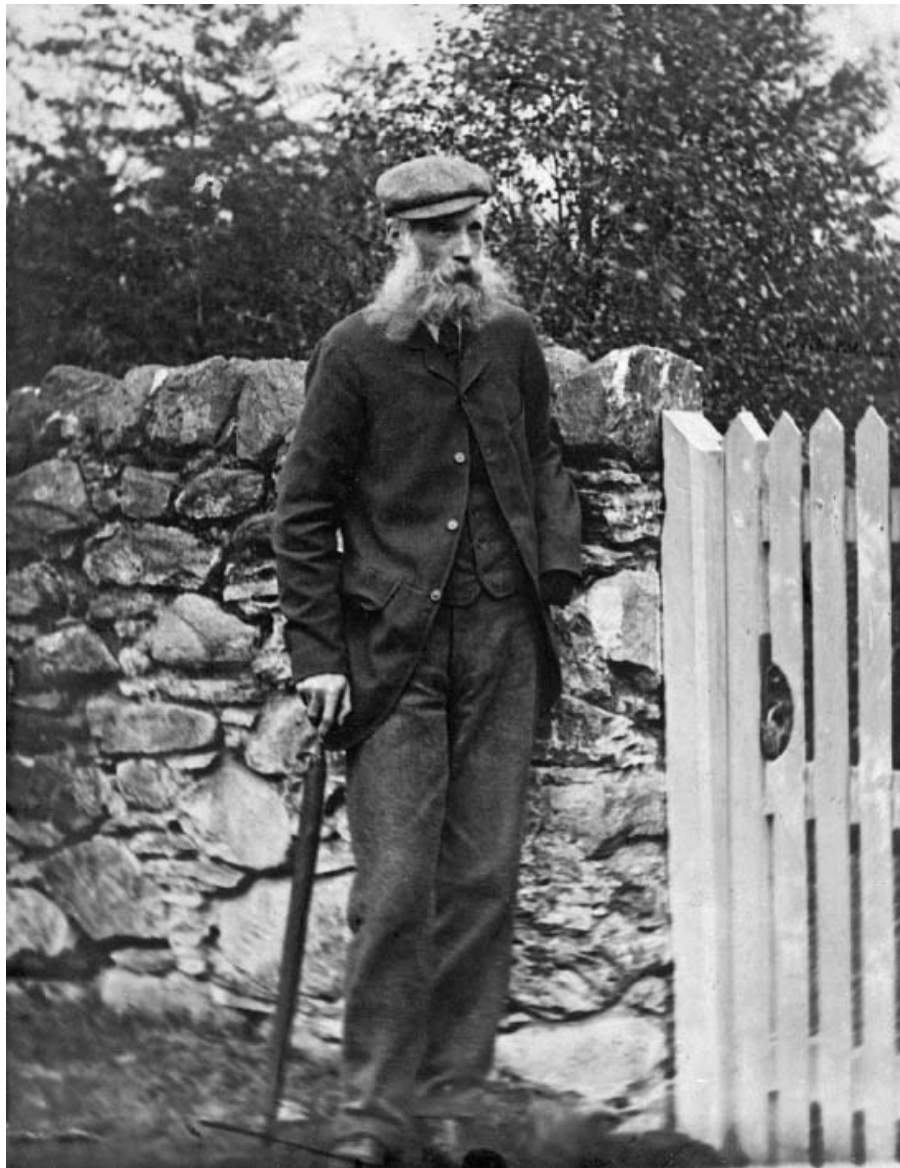
A flower garden, watercolor with pen and ink and pencil, undated

Botanizing was part of her wider interest in natural history that gathered speed in her twenties. She bagged insects, dug for fossils, drew Roman archaeological findings and, of course, studied animals. Intensely. She and Bertram were known to prepare skeletons of departed pets. (When her journal was first published, *The Times of London* ran the story with the headline “Beatrix Potter Boiled Squirrels.”) In her day the sciences—geology, botany, biology, chemistry—were just splitting into their separate and academically regulated disciplines. Darwin had studied orchids, barnacles, birds, earthworms, and climbing plants as well as primates to develop his theories of natural selection. Even Gilbert and Sullivan’s modern major general had “information vegetable, animal, and mineral.”

She got encouragement from some unlikely quarters, including their Scottish postman. In Dunkeld, postman Charlie McIntosh was well known as the "Perthshire Naturalist." He was an improbable scientist with his mumbling speech, humble clothes, and uncertain posture yet, as Beatrix noted, "He is a perfect dragon of erudition, and not of gardener's Latin either." He used the miles of his postal delivery route as a great outdoor laboratory. "His successor has a tricycle," Beatrix observed. "It will save his legs, but modern habits and machines are not calculated to bring out individuality or the study of Natural History." When Beatrix was introduced to Charlie, he warmed to her burgeoning portfolio of mushroom portraits, "and his judgement speaking to their accuracy in minute botanical points gave me infinitely more pleasure than that of critics who assume more, and know less." A fruitful correspondence followed. Letters, drawings, and specimens were exchanged through the twice-daily mail. In one letter she notes, "*Agaricus variabilis* is almost like a pansy and *A. velutipes* also very handsome ... It is a real pleasure to copy them, they are such lovely colours."

In her letters to McIntosh, she regularly uses the botanical names for the specimens under discussion and shows an understanding of their relationships to one another. After all, botanical classification is a hierarchy not unlike the class distinctions among the people in her day-to-day life. She began to concentrate on the fungi, to the exclusion of other lines of Natural History study. "I do not often consider the stars," she wrote in her journal, "they give me a tissick. It is more than enough that there should be forty thousand named and classified funguses." She intended to master them.

Beatrix explored the growth habits of fungi. Her schoolroom was transformed into a botanical laboratory. She devoted time to sprouting spores (forty or fifty different species), to studying slides under her microscope, and always, to drawing. She consulted the collections at the Natural History Museum. Her explorations piqued the interest of her uncle, Sir Henry Roscoe, knighted for his contributions to chemistry and married to Rupert Potter's sister Lucy. Roscoe accompanied her to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, to meet the experts there. Is it any surprise that their reception was cool? Beatrix Potter was an amateur, without credentials and, to make matters worse, an almost-thirty-year-old unmarried woman.



Mr. Charles (Charlie) McIntosh, naturalist and postman, undated. (His left hand was injured in a sawmill accident in his teens.)



Mushrooms, watercolor with pencil, undated

She returned to Kew repeatedly. On one visit she saw a botanist growing spores in his laboratory in the herbarium. "I opine that he has passed several stages of development into a fungus himself," she wrote. "I am occasionally conscious of a very similar transformation." On another visit, she confronted the Director and his Principal Assistant: "There is no harm in giving an opinion, so long as it is made clear whether it is only an opinion, or the result of observation, we find some people make theories out of dried specimens without the least experience of the way things grow." In addition to growing

mushrooms, Beatrix Potter was growing up.

Uncle Harry, now fully convinced, worked with her to document her findings in an essay—she refers to it over several months in her journal as “my Paper”—refining it into an acceptable academic piece. As women were not generally admitted to the Linnean Society, London’s premier botanical group, it was Roscoe who brought her paper there and one of the gentlemen from Kew who read it. The paper was deemed unpublishable without more work. Beatrix Potter withdrew it without further comment in her journal. It has since been lost. The Society’s minutes are silent. We are left only with her title, “On the Germination of the Spores of *Agaricineae*.” Beatrix Potter’s scientific investigations into botany largely end. Her journal ends too.



The herbarium at Kew, about 1890

It is easy to envision a different path for Beatrix Potter. With more encouragement at Kew or the Linnean Society she might have become an illustrator of botanical books, in the legion of Victorian women who painted plants. Even she could see it. To her cousin Edith Gaddum’s ten-year-old son Walter, she wrote “I have been drawing funguses very hard, I think some day they will be put in a book but it will be a dull one to read.”



Mushrooms in the woods, watercolor with pencil, undated

Still, she treasured her fungus paintings, getting them out over the years to show select visitors. She made folios in which to store them, calico-covered, lined with cambric, and fastened carefully with neat ties. Before she died she ensured that the paintings would go to a museum that would appreciate them. Decades after her death, a mycologist, W. P. K. Findlay, used her paintings to illustrate his book, *Wayside and Woodland Fungi*, which is dull only if you are interested neither in mushrooms nor Beatrix Potter.

FLOWERING



SOMETIMES A HEAVILY pruned shrub comes suddenly into flower. In her thirties, unmarried but clever, opinionated and quietly ambitious, Beatrix Potter wanted to *do* something. She yearned for something other than assuming the rounds of calling cards, menu planning, and household management as her parents aged. She had always invented stories. Even during the most scientific days of her fungus phase, she imagined a group of mushrooms in a Lake District landscape looking like tiny “people singing and bobbing and dancing in the grass and under the leaves all down below, like the whistling that some people cannot hear of stray mice and bats, and I sitting above and knowing something about them.”

She had written these words during her first stay in the village of Sawrey, where her family lighted for their summer sojourn of 1896. Unlike Wray Castle, isolated in its estate acreage, the Potters’ summer lease in Sawrey, Lakefield, was part of the village, merely set back from the main road with a large lawn. She painted watercolors of the garden at the house there, with its views over the small, exquisite Esthwaite Water.

She found a beautiful quality of light in these gentle Southern Lakes, mellowed by the water and broken by the heights. The weather, often wet, was changeable, with clouds that moved and refracted. Morning mist on the surface of the water turned pale pink as the sun rose. The smells of the moorland with its gorse and heather mingled with agricultural smells, fresh mown hay and equally fresh manure.

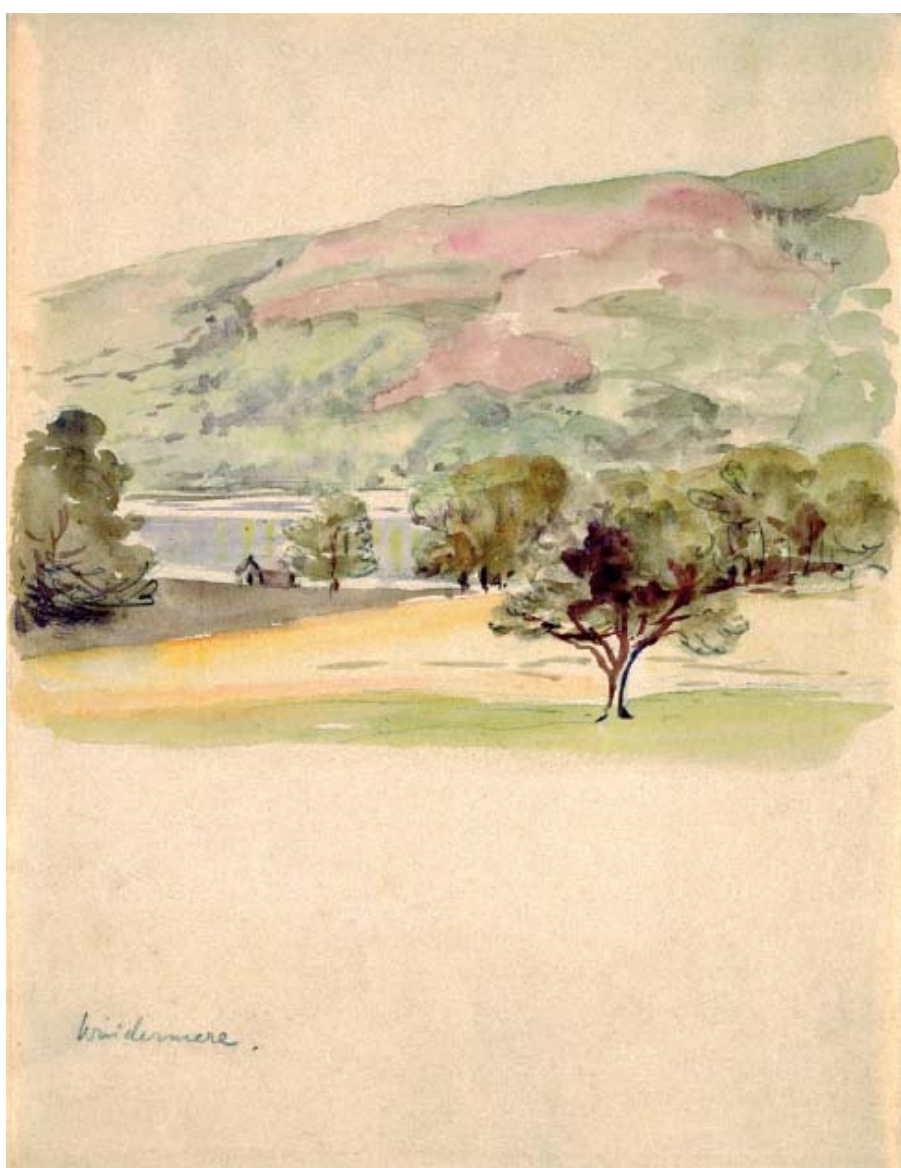
She drove her pony cart. She went on walks with Bertram, “not without a sense of trespass, but the air and wild herbage very pleasant.” She collected seeds of wild plants like balsam. She drove down to the ferry and up to Wray, catching the light reflecting off Windermere. She went to the Hawkshead agricultural show where, “The only prize *we* took was for *common turnips*, which little Mr. James Rogerson [the gardener] seemed to think almost an insult.”

Strolling among the slate-roofed houses of Sawrey, she made the

acquaintance of the locals and admired their small flowery gardens. “It is nearly as perfect a little place as I ever lived in, and such nice old-fashioned people in the village,” she exclaimed. It would take another ten years before Beatrix Potter would have a flowery little garden of her own in this perfect place in the Lakes.



The garden at Lakefield, watercolor with pen and ink, about 1900

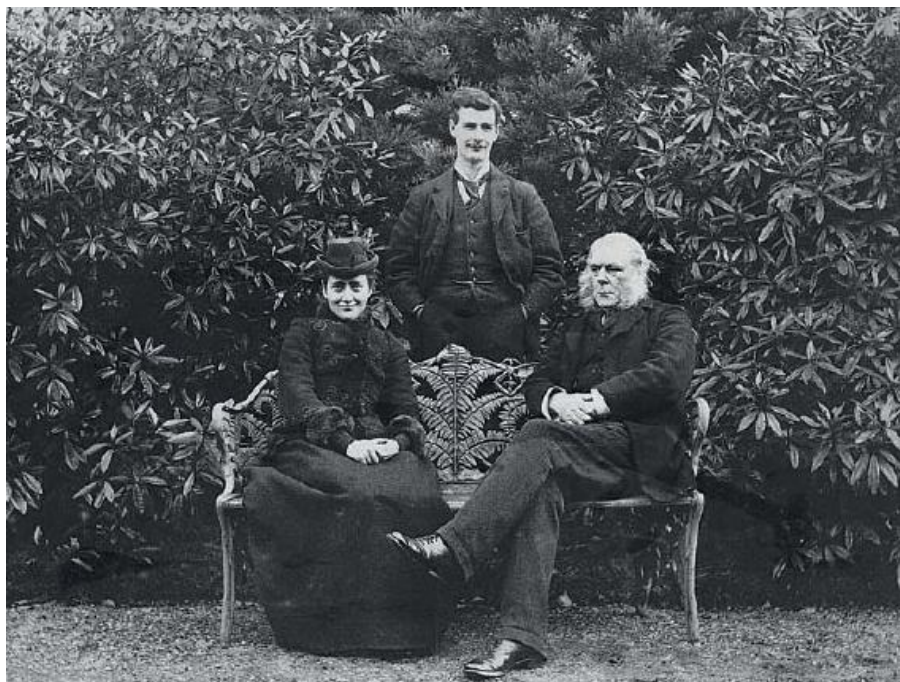


Windermere, watercolor with pencil, undated



Beatrix driving her pony cart, photographed by Rupert Potter, 1889

Like many creative people, Beatrix Potter had peaks of inspiration and output, and the 1890s was one of hers. While musing about the reproductive processes of mushrooms she, with the help of Bertram and Uncle Harry, got a few of her drawings published as holiday cards and illustrations. She also started writing down stories for children, very specific children, stories with flora as well as fauna.



Beatrix, Bertram, and Rupert Potter, 1892

Her last governess, Annie Carter, just three years older than Beatrix, was now married to Edwin Moore and living in Wandsworth, a suburban neighborhood in southwest London. Beatrix had taken a special interest in the Moore children, visiting them when in London, sending them letters when away. The letters were picture letters, stories and traveler's tales illustrated with quick pen and ink sketches. Having real children as an audience stoked her active imagination.

In the first of these letters, written to four-year-old Noel Moore from Falmouth in April 1892, she tells him, "I have come a very long way in a puff-puff to a place in Cornwall, where it is very hot, and there are palm trees in the gardens & camellias & rhod[od]endrons in flower which are very pretty." The next spring she writes him again from Falmouth, mentioning, "I saw a man & a little boy getting sea-weed, they had a nice donkey with panniers to carry to their garden, for manure, it makes the cabbages grow." In her most famous letter, written that September from Eastwood in Scotland, she introduced the rabbit quartet of Flopsy, Mopsy, Cottontail, and Peter, living with their mother under the roots of a fir tree. It was Annie Moore, friend and confidante, who suggested that Beatrix might adapt this story letter to her son into a publishable book. Beatrix borrowed the letter back, recopied it, and designed: "The Tale of Peter Rabbit and Mr. McGregor's Garden."

Hardwicke Rawnsley, her preservationist friend from Wray Castle

days, helped her submit the manuscript through the appropriate channels. Publisher after publisher sent rejections. Beatrix finally gave up and turned to self-publishing her little book with an abbreviated title, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. The first printing, 250 black-and-white copies dated December 16, 1901, sold out, so she printed another 200 the following February. In the midst of this, Frederick Warne & Co. reconsidered and took on the book, subject to the illustrations being redone in color. Warne published *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* in 1902.

This is a pussy
I saw looking for
fish -



These are two little
dogs that live in
the hotel, + two tame



Sea gulls

+ a great many
cocks + hens in
the garden.



I am going today to a place called the Lizard
so I have no time to draw any more pictures,
+ I remain yours affectionately

Beatrix Potter.

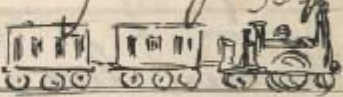
Falmouth Hotel

Falmouth

Exmouth 11th 92

My dear Noel,

Thank you for your
very interesting letter, which you
sent me a long time ago.

I have come a very long way
in a puff-puff 
to a place in Cornwall, where it
is very hot, and there are
palm trees in the gardens & camellias
& rhododendrons in flower which are



Very pretty.

Part of a letter to Noel Moore, 1892

The story opens in a woodland setting, with a mother rabbit sending her children out foraging for blackberries. The three obedient if somewhat dull daughters take their baskets and crooked sticks and get to work picking the thicket clean. The plot's main action centers on their blue-jacketed brother in Mr. McGregor's now famous garden.

The garden is more likely that of McGregor's employer. Look at McGregor, kneeling in the dirt with unkempt beard, dibbler, and hobnailed boots. Compare him to his work place with its high walls, grand box-edged beds, and goldfish pond. While he was no doubt the general of the potting shed, it was a property that was beyond his means. He and his rabbit pie-preparing Missus would have lived in an estate cottage as caretakers, not owners. Beatrix Potter was economical in the clues that she laid out in her words and pictures.

In *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, written in Potter's matter-of-fact voice, the garden is not sentimentalized. From page one, she takes off the white gloves, noting that Peter's unwise father had ignored his wife's good advice and ended up in a pie on the McGregor table. Rabbits in most gardens were not pets like her Peter Piper, Benjamin Bouncer, and all the rest. While Beatrix had been known to free a wild rabbit from a trap, she stated unequivocally, "They are regular vermin, but one cannot stand by to see a thing mauled about from one's friendship for the race. Papa in his indignation pulled up the snare. I fancy our actions were ... illegal."



Peter Rabbit meets Mr. McGregor

The country houses that the Potters occupied over the years had gardeners who would not have appreciated their animal rights

activities. Scottish gardeners were the norm, both north and south of the borders. Scotland was a known exporter of gardeners and botanists. In *Adam Bede*, novelist George Eliot wrote, “But a gardener is Scotch, as a French teacher is Parisian.”

Mr. McGregor was a type, and Beatrix knew the type up close. Her grandparents employed gardeners, as did the country house owners from whom her father let. In 1894, staying in Lennel, yet another property in Scotland, she wrote about the ripening cherries on the tree in the garden, reporting “the rooks are so tame they will scarcely leave it for stone throwing, and the thrushes sit and stare. I have been tying up some bunches in little muslin bags, also weeding, to the amusement of the old gardener.”

Beatrix wrote for the record that she never knew a gardener named McGregor though “several bearded horticulturists have resented the nick-name.” He and Peter seemed to have emerged fully clothed as it were—“their names especially seemed to be inevitable.” Beatrix Potter took memories of gardeners over decades of country estate summers and came up with a composite character. “Mr. McGregor was no special person unless in the rheumatic method of planting cabbages,” she wrote, “I remember seeing a gardener in Berwickshire extended full-length on his stomach weeding a carriage drive with a knife.”

As well as characters, Beatrix Potter drew garden settings for *Peter Rabbit* from various holiday homes. One was particularly influential. “If ... [Mr. McGregor’s] vegetable garden and wicket gate were anywhere it was at Lingholm near Keswick,” Beatrix wrote, “but it would be vain to look for it there, as a firm of landscape gardeners did away with it, and laid it out anew with paved walks.” Beatrix knew Lingholm well, having spent ten summers there with her family. Lingholm’s walled kitchen garden was a standard feature for nineteenth-century estates. The wall segregated the more mundane members of the plant family from the ornamental flowerbeds.

In her *Tale*, Peter Rabbit wriggles under a gate into a kitchen garden with a realistic mix of fruits and vegetables. His illegal actions begin with trespass but quickly descend into poaching. Peter’s binge eating takes place in an early summer garden where rows of French beans provide shade to the maturing lettuce, carrots, and radishes. Cabbages are being transplanted for a fall crop. Ripening gooseberries are netted against the birds—which later act as a cheering section for the straggling bunny.

When Beatrix Potter signed on with Warne to publish the commercial edition of her book, she worried about “the rather uninteresting colour of a good many of the subjects which are most of them rabbit-brown and green.” She solved this problem by adding flowers. Nasturtiums bloom orange and yellow outside the potting

shed. Peter knocks a shower of potted red geraniums from a windowsill. And what geraniums! These specimens are not only floriferous, but sport variegated leaves.

Proper procedures of horticulture are evident. When “feeling rather sick, he went to look for some parsley,” Beatrix poses the bilious-looking Peter in front of a pot filled with cuttings. They look like stem cuttings of geraniums, setting roots in wet sand. They are tidy and carefully labeled. Peter stands next to a cucumber frame. Inside the frame, a deep pit would have been filled with a thick layer of manure, then a layer of soil. As the manure decomposes, it heats the soil and, along with the sun concentrated by the glass, creates its own self-powered greenhouse for long-season vegetables like cucumbers. Clearly Beatrix Potter, who at this point did not have a garden of her own, had absorbed lessons from the gardeners she had met over the years.



Peter Rabbit takes a leap

Mr. McGregor’s fictional garden shed is well stocked: a broom for sweeping, a spade for heavy digging, a trowel for transplanting. He

has different sizes of flowerpots: small “thimbles” for starting seeds and “long toms” for growing on deep-rooted seedlings. Some pots are rimmed; some are not. The tools of horticulture—soil sieve and watering can, rakes and spades—set the stage in Potter’s unique style. Peter hides in a watering can, unfortunately for him filled with water. Mr. McGregor just misses trapping him with a soil sieve, normally used for filtering out large bits out of the compost rather than trapping young rabbits.

In the garden we see Mr. McGregor using a dibber to set out the young cabbages in his rheumatic way. He picks up a hoe to cultivate the onions. To get a better view, Peter climbs up into a traditional wooden wheelbarrow. McGregor grabs a rake when he chases Peter. And with Peter’s abandoned clothes, he makes up a little scarecrow, ineffective with the birds but effective for setting up the sequel.



There must be a rabbit in here somewhere

The Tale of Peter Rabbit was a surprise success. As a result, Beatrix went on to publish one or two books with Warne every year, arriving, as one reviewer put it “as much a manifestation of autumn as falling

leaves.” *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin* has its own falling leaves that the squirrels use as little boats to make their way to an island in Derwentwater. Nutkin’s rhymes highlight the trees: beech, oak, cherry, hazel, and crab, but it is a story of the woodland, not of the garden. Nor does *The Tailor of Gloucester*, set in a city shop, have anything to do with gardening, though the embroidery, deftly managed by mice, includes some exquisite flowers. It wasn’t until the next bunny book, *The Tale of Benjamin Bunny*, published in 1904, that the garden came once again into play.

Fawe Park, the neighbor to Lingholm on Derwentwater, was the Potter family rental for the summer of 1903. Beatrix, enthusiastic about her illustrations, set to work with verve drawing and painting in the garden. The Fawe Park sketchbook matches the *Benjamin Bunny* illustrations in lockstep. A pear tree espaliered on the walls of the Fawe Park kitchen garden provides the entry point for two fictional rabbit burglars. Striped carnations that bloomed at Fawe Park that summer appear as lanky specimens in McGregor’s garden and in costume as Benjamin’s boutonnière. The little rabbits walk on wooden planks laid through the garden, used to avoid compacting the soil. Onions, drying in the Fawe Park vegetable beds, become the booty for two marauding bunnies. When Mr. Rabbit, who is Benjamin’s father and Peter’s uncle, enters, he sports his pipe of rabbit tobacco, or, as Beatrix tells us, “what we call lavender.” Beatrix told her editor that rather than ending the book with the “rather ... trite” happily ever after, she preferred to end with “old Mrs Rabbit strung up the onions and hung them from the kitchen ceiling, with the bunches of herbs and the rabbit tobacco” as she thought “rabbit tobacco” was a rather fine phrase.



Drawing at Derwentwater, 1903

Her little books brought Beatrix Potter out of her shell, her letters from the period indicating stronger relationships with friends and cousins. With her publisher, F. Warne & Co., she was assertive. About a possible new project she wrote, "I cannot design pattern borders, but I like drawing flowers. I will go on with it on approval if you are undecided, or for myself if you decline it." Warne's was a family business, and the large, sociable Warne clan opened its arms to her. Norman was her project manager; she interacted with his older brothers, Fruing and Harold. Norman and his sister Millie welcomed her to their Bedford Square home where they lived with their widowed mother. They were a delight to know—Millie and Mrs. Warne who gardened, Norman who believed.

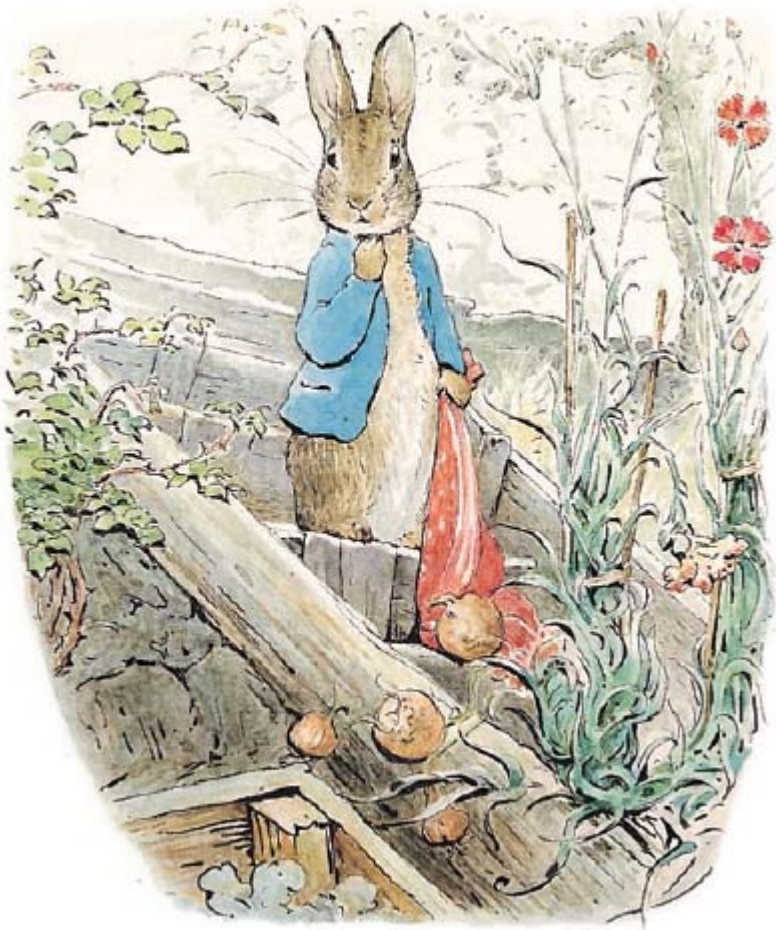


Flower pots, frames, and tubs, watercolor, 1903



Peter and Benjamin on alert among flower pots, frames, and tubs

As time progressed, Beatrix's letters to Norman softened with playful and affectionate undertones. She gave Norman a nickname, Johnny Crow, and delighted in the little glass-sided box that he made for Hunca Munca, the star of *The Tale of Two Bad Mice*. In Lyme Regis with her family she wrote Norman about primrose-covered banks along the Pinney footpath. "I don't know whether I shall get as far as the big land slip by myself," she confessed, "I have not anyone to walk with." She enjoyed his company as well as his professional advice, and of their latest project, *The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle*, she wrote, "I do *hate* finishing books, I would like to go on with them for years." It appears it wasn't only the book she had in mind.



Peter letting go of the red handkerchief

Beatrix compared herself to Anne Elliot in Jane Austen's *Persuasion* when, on July 25, 1905, she received a letter from Norman asking for her hand. Her position changed from spinster daughter one day, to cherished fiancée the next. Alas, her parents objected. Norman was not in the right set. He was, after all, in the trades, and the Potters were a generation removed from the sullying influence of cotton manufacturing. To keep the peace, Beatrix and Norman agreed to a quiet engagement. She wore his ring, but for the time being nothing was announced beyond the immediate families.



Carnations at Fawe Park, watercolor with pen and ink, 1903



The Warne siblings, with Norman and Millie on the left, undated

Beatrix Potter's happy ending was short lived. The garden that they might have planted together was not to be. Just a month after their betrothal, Norman Warne died after the sudden onset of leukemia. He was buried in Highgate Cemetery. Beatrix visited with Millie and wrote his brother's wife, fussing as one does about the details when, in the face of death, there is the enormity of grief. "The stone is put back quite neatly again; ... I don't believe the grass will ever grow well under the fir tree, I was wondering whether white Japanese anemonies would grow where it is rather shaded, Millie says you have them in your garden & know their habits." For her dear Norman all that was left to consider were flowers for his grave. She wore his ring always.



Mr. Jeremy Fisher swimming

In the days after Norman's death, Beatrix fled to Gwynnynog in North Wales, the home of her widowed Uncle Burton. While there, work was her comfort, as well as letters from Norman's siblings. She worked on the proofs of *Tiggy-Winkle*. She laid out a book about a frog named Mr. Jeremy Fisher, with drawings of forget-me-nots and water lilies. She wrote Harold Warne, "I know some people don't like frogs! But I think I had convinced Norman that I could make it a really pretty book with a good many flowers & water plants." And sketching, particularly in the garden, was good therapy.



Mr. Jeremy Fisher and friends in his garden

Gwaynynog had a large garden that she had described years earlier as “two-thirds surrounded by a red-brick wall with many apricots, and an inner circle of old grey apple trees on wooden espaliers. It is very productive but not tidy, the prettiest kind of garden, where bright, old fashioned flowers grow amongst the currant bushes.” The gardens at Gwaynynog later became the setting for *The Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies*, published in 1909, but first would influence, at a reduced scale, the design of her garden at Hill Top Farm.



The garden at Gwaynynog, watercolor with pencil, 1911

ROOTS



THE YEAR they were engaged, Norman and Beatrix had been working on *The Tale of the Pie and the Patty-Pan*, a complicated story with beautiful drawings of those flowery little gardens around the village of Sawrey. By that time, Beatrix was already on the hunt for property there, no doubt with the thought that Mr. and Mrs. Norman Warne, publisher and writer, would maintain an address in London but have a permanent country home in the Lake District. Now, less than two months after his death, she bought thirty-four-acre Hill Top Farm. Purchased with royalties from her books supplemented by a legacy from an aunt, it was a declaration of independence. She had the pride of a new owner, though locals grumbled that she had paid too much for the place.

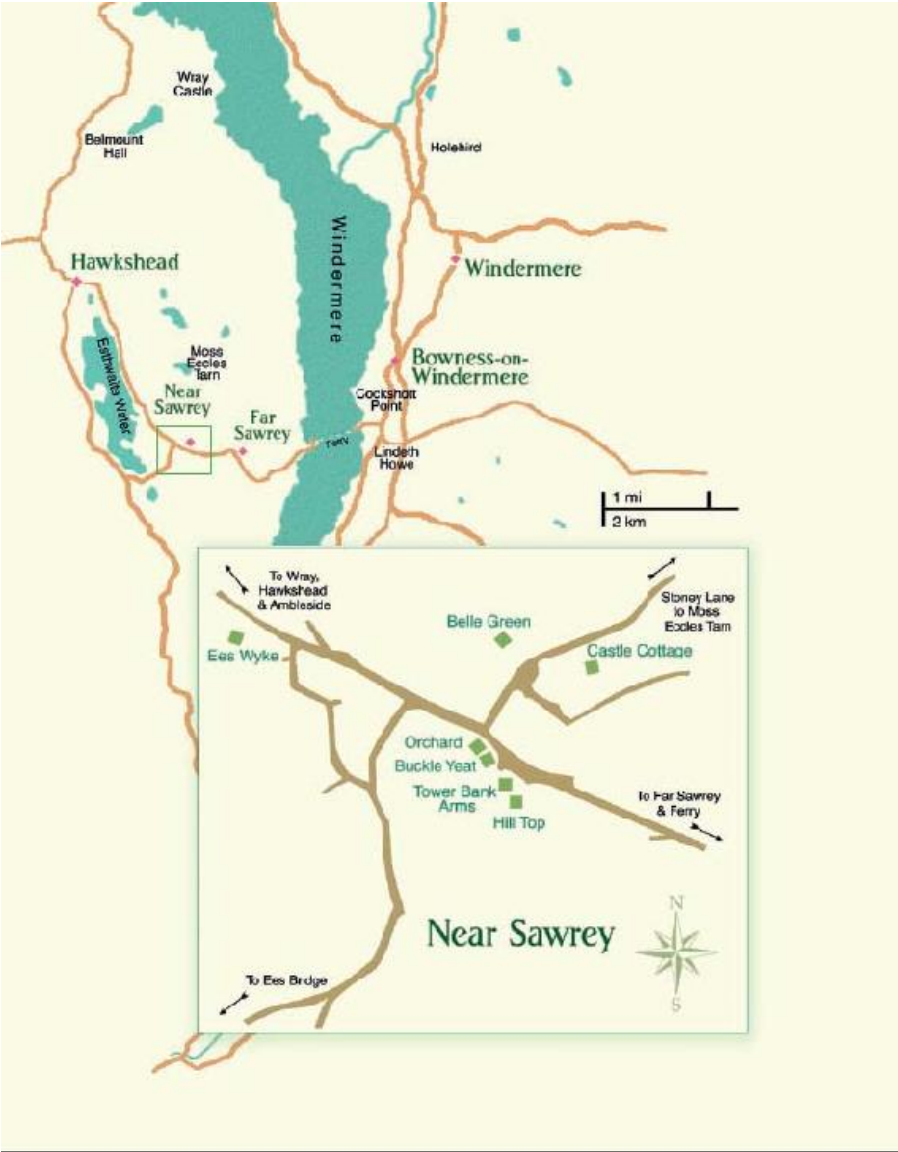
Hill Top Farm sits on a rise with its back to Near Sawrey, its lane bending at an acute angle up Tower Bank. Sawrey is a two-part village made up of the hamlets prefaced Near and Far. They are connected like Siamese twins by the main road and a stream named Wilfin Beck. In one of those contradictions of history, Near Sawrey, the location of Hill Top, is farther from the ferry where most visitors arrived in Beatrix Potter's time. The "Near" in Sawrey refers to its proximity to the market town of Hawkshead, more important in the years when the village was named.



The invitation from *The Tale of the Pie and the Patty-Pan*

The main road bends through Near Sawrey as if it couldn't decide whether to stay or go. The farmsteads strung along the road include cottages like Buckle Yeat (its lovely dooryard garden was featured in *The Tale of the Pie and the Patty-Pan*) and Tower Bank Arms, the public house with its drape of roses. A long lane perpendicular to the main road stretches up Oatmeal Crag toward the tarns, small upland lakes. When Beatrix settled in, the lane was lined with the post office, the local market (later to be featured in *The Tale of Ginger and Pickles*), and various cottages including the blacksmith's home, Belle Green. Another road turned down the hill toward Esthwaite Water, eventually making its way over Ees Bridge along the shore and back to Hawkshead. "I have often been laughed at for thinking Esthwaite

Water the most beautiful of the Lakes,” said Beatrix.



Near Sawrey and environs



The garden in front of Buckle Yeat Cottage in Near Sawrey, watercolor with pen and ink, undated

Having spent family holidays in the area, Beatrix found that Hill Top Farm had the modest comforts of familiarity. She knew the tenants, John Cannon and his family, as they had boarded the Potters' coachman. Impressed with Cannon's honesty, she decided to keep him on to run the farm.

Her first thoughts were for redoing the garden and adding on to the house. The cottage pleased her with its old cabinets and fireplaces, in spite of an infestation of rats to battle. A new wing for the Cannons would reserve the charms of the old house for her.

Gardening eases grief. Beatrix launched herself into the pleasant distractions of making her first garden. She engaged a local mason to move the entry drive away from the front door, giving her more space for beds at the front of the house. Millie Warne, Norman's sister, became her garden confidante and first guest. To her, Beatrix wrote, "The garden is very overgrown & untidy, I hope next time you come it will be straighter, I have got the quarryman making walks & beds, it would not have been work for a visitor! But it will be a great pleasure to show you the result some day."



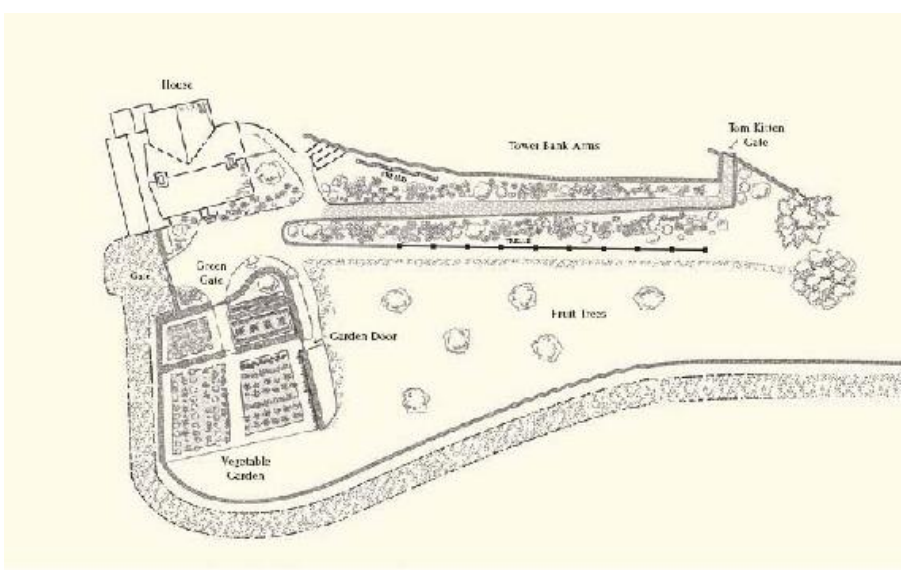
Snapdragons, watercolor with pen and ink, about 1903



A sketch of Hill Top's addition, pencil, undated

She laid out the main garden with a long axial path paved with stones. Deep beds stretched out on either side. The cottage was the focal point, its pointed porch of great slabs of slate drawing the visitor up. She commissioned a long wall to separate her garden from Tower Bank Arms on the right. On the left, the bed seemed too large and open to the orchard. Beatrix solved the problem by adding a long trellis, reminiscent of Gwaynynog. She made a garden that felt protected, a safe harbor from the high winds that she had weathered. Even the word *garden* comes from an etymological root that means *enclosed*.

The small scale of Hill Top Farm is surprising given Beatrix Potter's four decades of experience with country houses and their gardens. Rather than choosing an estate house, with a sublime view of lakeshore or upland "fells" and a grand, terraced landscape, she chose a working farm with a modest cottage and garden. Contrast this with her cousins Edith and William Gaddum who settled in 1899 at Brockhole, an estate on the other side of Windermere, and called in designer Thomas Mawson to lay out the acres of terraces and plantings. Beatrix chose her own path.



The gardens at Hill Top Farm

In creating her garden, Beatrix used stone from a quarry on her own land and local craftsmen, in sync with the Arts & Crafts style. The style celebrated the handmade in a world of increasing mechanization. While she had a separate walled vegetable garden and a linear garden divided with a symmetrical wooden trellis, her garden was not formal. She mixed loose drifts of hardy flowers with bulbs, flowering and fruiting shrubs, even some vegetables. Her cottage garden is in a distinct genre that emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Designers such as William Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll popularized this vernacular gardening style combining traditional materials, informal dense plantings, and a mixture of ornamental and edible plants. An Arts & Crafts garden encompasses the house; Hill Top's garden and house are fused into a complete whole.



A garden path and trellis at Gwaynynog, pencil, undated

In her first years as owner of Hill Top Farm, Beatrix did not live there; she only visited. As unmarried daughter she dutifully resided in London with her parents, though they seemed willing to part with her periodically. So she left many projects in the hands of contractors. Her first spring, 1906, she arrived to find that one of them had created a huge flat expanse for a lawn. Oh no! She moaned to Millie, "I believe the word 'tennis' was mentioned but I have never played it, so it conveyed nothing particular to my mind. I could not think why he was taking such a time & now I discover a thing big enough for playing football!" As she was disinclined to pay more money to have it fixed, she had the farmer plant out potatoes there. Why are so many gardening lessons learned the hard way? She consoled herself that the fruit trees that she had planted were showing their first blooms.



The cottage garden and trellis at Hill Top, watercolor with pencil, undated

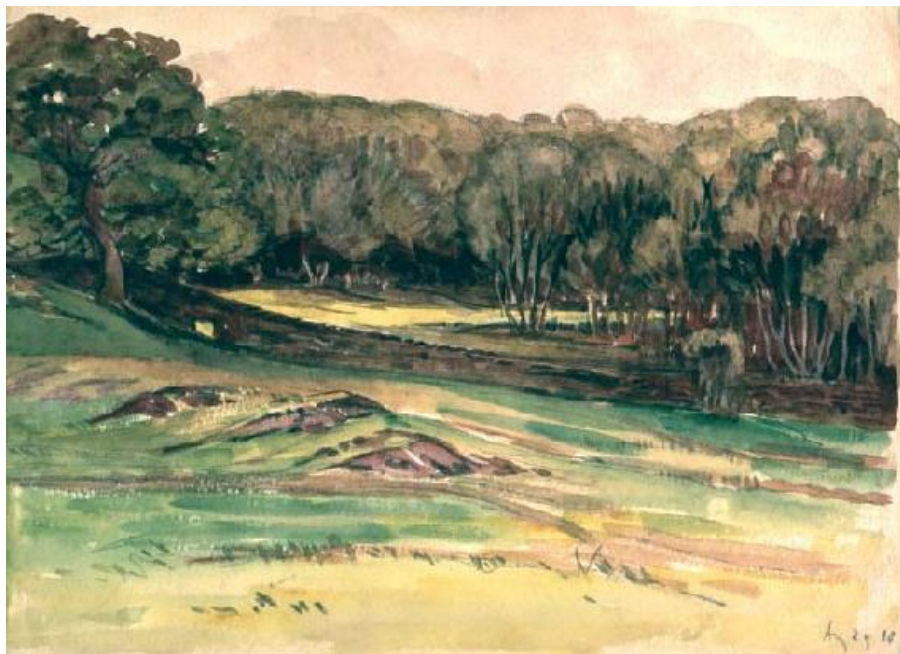
While the addition was underway at Hill Top, Beatrix lodged with the blacksmith and his wife, Fred and Harriet Satterthwaite, at their home, Belle Green, in Near Sawrey. Mrs. Satterthwaite had an opinion about all things gardening, including the weather. She introduced Beatrix to the tradition of the rain and Saint Swithin's day, July 15: "St. Swithin's day if thou dost rain / For forty days it will remain / St. Swithin's day if thou be fair / For forty days 'twill rain nae mair." Beatrix, ever-practical, worried about the hay and countered, "I should hope that tonight's downpour may be the end of it, in spite of St. S." In later years Beatrix took up the St. Swithin method of forecasting herself.



The Hill Top garden in early spring with enthusiastic pansies, undated

Beatrix wisely spent most of her first year with the Hill Top garden watching what came up and how things bloomed. An old rose clambering up the farmhouse had a neglected look but was pushing out new growth. She gathered up a swarm of bees in a borrowed skep. Mr. Satterthwaite fixed a box hive for them. When the Ees Bridge below her farm was pulled down, she gathered some wall-rue fern to install in her garden wall. "I like old walls," she avowed.

She had come to the right part of the world. Stacked, dry-laid stone walls lined the roads and pastures around Sawrey, dividing its dales and vales into small holdings framed in gray. The wall stone was laid horizontally until the top, with the capstones set at an angle like a long row of teeth. Occasionally the walls were pierced with low "hogg holes," which allowed yearling sheep (hogg)s to pass from one pasture to another while keeping in the cows.



Sawrey landscape with stone wall and hogg hole, watercolor with pencil, 1910

That August she was called from Hill Top to Lingholm to stay with her parents at their summer rental on Derwentwater. Only twenty miles from Sawrey, it still paled in any comparison with her new home. Lingholm was windy; Hill Top was protected. Lingholm's air was stuffy; Hill Top's was crisp. "I miss the sheltered open air & the gardening," she wrote Millie, "I think I might start weeding here! but it might be an uncivil reflection on the gardener, the weeds are awful!"



Phlox, watercolor with pencil, undated

Back at Hill Top in September, she started adding plants of her own to the garden. They were mostly pass-along plants, taken from other gardeners. Divisions of London pride, a type of saxifrage that Millie had given her, looked as if “they quite enjoyed the change of climate,” as did their new owner. A quarryman with a garden near the ferry offered some glorious phlox that she decided to intersperse with laurel bushes. Lilies from Millie would combine nicely with the azaleas. Her cousin Edith gave her “some bits” of another tiny saxifrage. Her gardening mentor, the indomitable Mrs. S., offered cuttings of crimson- and purple-flowered “white rock,” also known as aubrieta. Beatrix wondered if she would ever get it to grow as well as Mrs. Satterthwaite’s.

Neighbors started arriving unbidden with contributions. Mrs. Taylor was first, bringing “a very well meant but slightly ill-timed present of saxifrage ... she brought out a large newspaper full!” from the corner cottage. Beatrix, the new gardener on the block, was impressed with their generosity. “I am being inundated with offers of plants! It is very kind of people; and as it really is the right time to thin & replant, I don’t feel such a robber of the village gardens.”

Speaking of thievery, like many a guilty gardener before and since, Beatrix added to her plant palette with occasional pilfering. After all, “Mrs. Satterthwaite says stolen plants always grow.” To Millie she confessed that she was becoming light-fingered as well as green-fingered. “I stole some ‘honesty’ yesterday,” she wrote, “it was put to be burnt in a heap of garden refuse!” (The honesty she pinched was

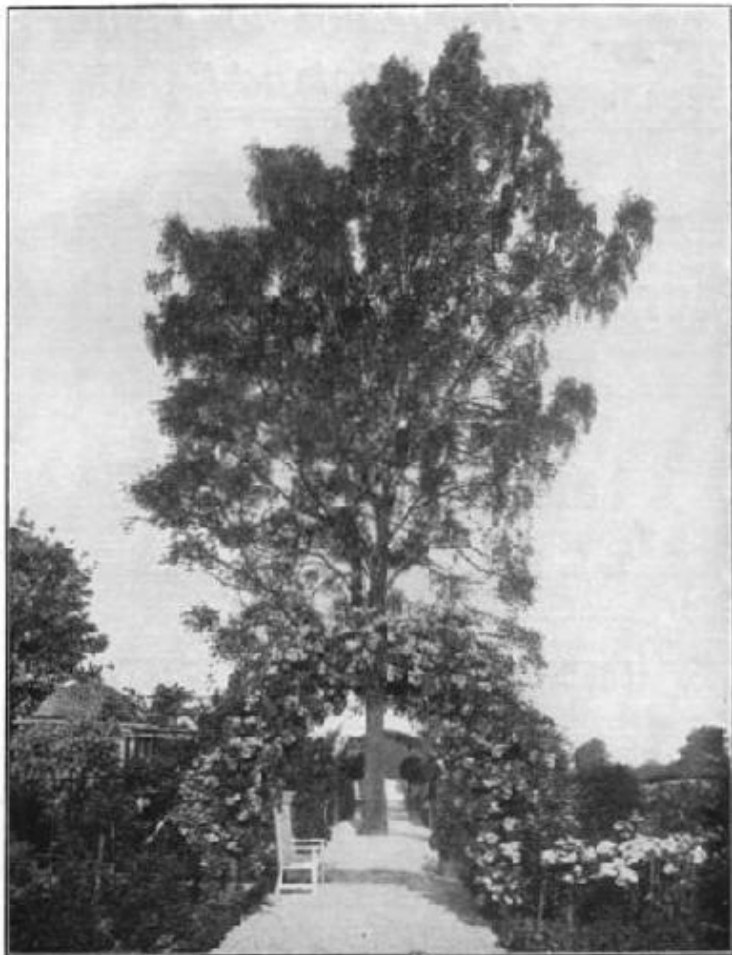
Lunaria annua, a freely self-sowing biennial with pink flowers in spring and profuse translucent seedheads in the fall.)

One September day, Beatrix announced to Millie, “I have got a large bed in the garden prepared by digging. I am going to the nursery at Windermere this week to choose some bushes.” Traveling along the long hill that wound down below Far Sawrey, she paid the toll for her horse and cart on the open ferry. (The ferry still offers a fare for horses.) The short boat ride across the waist of the lake took her to Bowness, next to the town of Windermere where she went to a nursery gaining fame: Lakeland Nursery, sometimes called Mawson Brothers’, the firm of Isaac and Robert Mawson. Their brother Thomas, the landscape architect, started it with them in the early 1890s. She was delighted with her purchases: lilac, mock orange, rhododendrons, and more. And even Beatrix Potter couldn’t resist a new plant, snapping up a red fuchsia. “They say it will grow out of doors here all winter.” She never mentions the fuchsia again; perhaps the nursery’s marketing was superior to the fuchsia’s hardiness.

Flowering shrubs were the workhorses of the garden, adding a middle layer to her design. Trees, trellis, and cottage created the largest partitions in her garden, the walls of her outdoor rooms. Smaller flowering plants—perennials, annuals, and bulbs—added drifts of color, like the watercolor paint seeping into the paper in her paintings.

The garden seemed to be working its cure. She felt better, and was eating so well that she told Millie she was nearly ashamed of her appetite. “There’s nothing like open air for soothing present anxiety and memories of past sadness,” she later wrote.

The old apple trees in the Hill Top orchard turned out to bear good cooking apples. She ate them for dinner, though she didn’t specify whether she prepared them herself. “Moreover I am absorbed in gardening,” she announced to Millie. “I am in course of putting liquid manure on the apple trees!! It is a most interesting performance with a long scoop.” Beatrix was no hothouse flower, waiting for a gardener to do her bidding.



ROSE ARCH AND SILVER BIRCH IN
MAWSON BROS.' NURSERIES,
WINDERMERE.

One of the most important industries in the Lake District is the growing of Trees, Shrubs and Hardy Plants, many of which are used by Mawson Bros. in furnishing the gardens laid out by them in various parts of the country, whilst others are purchased by a large clientele who find that Hardy Trees and Shrubs from the Lake District succeed admirably.

These Nurseries are delightfully situated, and are always open to visitors, who may inspect the many rare and beautiful flowers at their leisure. Catalogues free.

An old advertisement for the Mawson Brothers' nursery, undated

She got her hands dirty, taking an interest in her property from the ground up. "I think I shall attack the county council about manure,"

she wrote in an assertive tone to Millie, "I am entitled to all the road sweepings along my piece, & their old man is using it to fill up holes, which is both illegal & nasty." She never reported whether or not she resolved this particular business. For her lily bulbs, she mixed old mortar and peat, balancing the light, acidic soil. She had a new pump put in at the same time the plaster ceiling was repaired. (She had fallen through the old ceiling of the back kitchen, much to her amusement and the alarm of the workmen.)

She was abuzz with her garden, declaring, "My news is all gardening at present. I went to see an old lady at Windermere, & impudently took a large basket & trowel with me." Now able to put her horticultural knowledge to work, she reported, "I got nice things in handfuls without any shame, among others a bundle of lavender slips, if they "strike" will be enough for a lavender hedge; and another bundle of violet suckers, I am going to set some of them in the orchard." She had obviously learned propagation techniques.

Beatrix started learning the techniques of farming too. She observed John Cannon cutting the tall bracken fern, starting to dry after a September frost, to use for bedding the livestock stalls in winter. His children, Ralph and Betsy, were enlisted to help. "He has cut it about a mile off up the lane behind Belle Green, it is a rough road to bring it down. I think I will go up next time with the cart & help the children to rake it, it is such nice dry crackly fern."



Beatrix in a Sawrey garden, 1913



At the front door



The puddle-ducks go past



Mrs. Tabitha Twitchit and the kittens go up the garden path

Not all children were welcome in the Hill Top garden, at least not unsupervised. *The Tale of Tom Kitten* (1907) is dedicated to “All Pickles—especially to those that get upon my garden wall.” As a new gardener, she wanted to protect her plants and dry-laid walls from their thoughtless steps. In *Tom Kitten*, Beatrix shares much of the front garden at Hill Top with her readers. Tom’s mother, Mrs. Tabitha Twitchit, turns her three little kittens out into the garden in their best and most uncomfortable party attire. Her injunctions are specific as, toast fork in hand, she sternly escorts them out the door into the splendor of climbing roses and snapdragons. Tom, Moppet, and Mittens don’t even make it down the path before their clothes are stained green. They climb the Hill Top rockery among the rhododendrons and tall ferns. Stoney Lane winds up through the fells in the background. A double picket gate, the gate to Hill Top’s garden path, is a key feature. When Tabitha finds the miscreants minus their

clothes (you must read the story if you want to know to whom the clothes have been transferred, in Shakespearean comedy-fashion), she inflicts corporal punishment to a floriferous backdrop of irises and peonies. The illustration is true to a gardener's eye, as these plants bloom through the glorious peak of an English summer.



The little boy finds Jemima's eggs among the rhubarb



Jemima Puddle-duck meets the “the gentleman with the sandy whiskers”

On mornings in June when the sun rose early, Beatrix Potter looked out her bedroom window at Hill Top. The old glass in the farmhouse windows contorted the view, making the sheep and the trees and the hill and the garden ripple like reflections on the tarn. She liked to watch the calves, Norah and Rose and Blossom. Everything was delightful. Even watching the cow being milked was an adventure.

The following year, *The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck* was written as “A Farmyard Tale for Ralph and Betsy.” This story of a simpleton duck has a beautiful drawing of the walled vegetable garden at Hill Top, including the rhubarb patch where Jemima tries unsuccessfully to hide her eggs. The beehive is in its special niche in the stone wall. The wrought iron gate sets off the vegetable garden from the dooryard garden. Plants are part of the joke in *Jemima*, as foxgloves appear with the sandy-whiskered gentleman, in front of his house and behind his log seat. Silly Jemima doesn’t get the clues, though the reader knows he is a fox. When asked to bring an assortment of herbs to cook her own goose, so to speak, Jemima collects “sage and thyme, and mint and two onions, and some parsley” from the Hill Top garden. Beatrix’s favorite sheepdog, Kep, is the hero of the story.



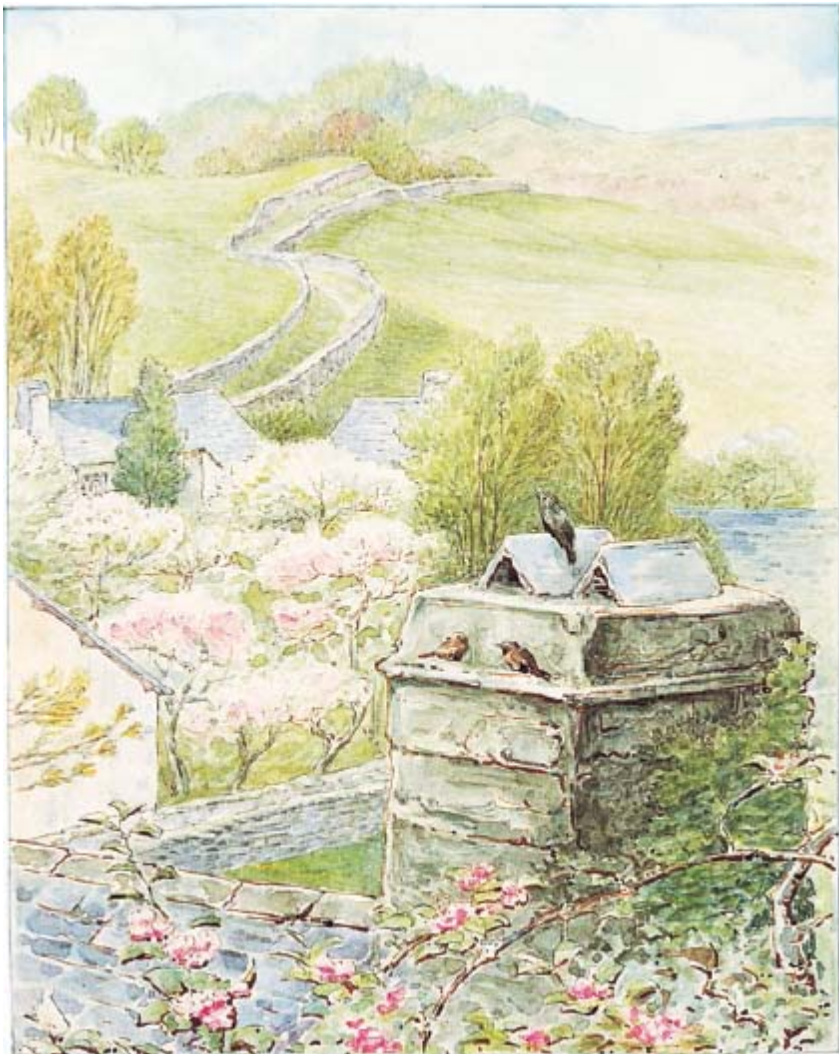
Jemima collecting herbs

In one of her letters to children, Beatrix told of another of her dogs with a particular talent for entrances. "I had a dog, old Fleet, ... who used to open a ... similar latch in the iron garden gate, and what's more she (standing on her hind legs) holding the latch used to step backwards pulling the gate open towards herself. I could never teach her to close it." The green iron gate at Hill Top is of particular note, with its bold form and perfect color. Its bright green color blended with the garden and offset the dark stone wall. She installed a matching gate in the side yard of the new extension of the house.



A detail of the green wrought iron gate at Hill Top

Beatrix loved to walk the paths and lanes of her new home. In *The Tale of Samuel Whiskers* (originally called *The Roly-Poly Pudding*), published the same year as *Jemima*, she incorporates an illustration of the countryside—her orchard in bloom and the rolling meadows and copses beyond. It is literally a bird’s-eye view. Two sparrows and a small dark bird perch on Hill Top’s chimney, and the roses reach up, up, to the top of the gable. In the stillness of a favorite trek uphill to Moss Eccles Tarn between Oatmeal Crag and Cuckoo Brow Woods, the silence was broken by the chatty course of Wilfin Beck, the munching of sheep and cows, and the occasional caw of a crow that must have brought Norman, her “Johnny Crow,” to mind.



A view with Hill Top's chimney and roses

RIPENING



BEATRIX POTTER did not cultivate celebrity. Instead, she spent her spare time in a quiet country life on her farm and behind her garden wall. Still, word leaked to the locals that she was the Peter Rabbit lady. Working in her garden, she overheard a driver tell a group of sightseers, “That’s ’er ’ouse.” The passengers responded “Hah? ’oo’s?” requiring a lengthy explanation of her life and works. Beatrix smiled, feeling this demonstrated “refreshing ignorance of [Peter Rabbit] ... on part of cargo who have obviously never read that book. Such is fame.”

Beatrix continued writing books and designing spin-off merchandise—toys, china, wallpaper, and the like—in part to fund her garden efforts. Money, her own money, meant emancipation from constraints, parental and otherwise, and the garden always called for more. Gardening can be described as a hole one digs in the ground into which to shovel funds. There is always a new project, a new plant, or a new tool. Buying Hill Top and making the first alterations to garden and cottage had exhausted her savings. She wrote at intervals to Harold Warne, asking about how much she might expect. “The place is not at all expensive to keep going,” she observed, “but there is still ample opportunity to lay out the garden and surroundings.”



The Flopsy Bunnies follow Mr. McGregor

With these opportunities in mind, her new book returned to a location that was popular with her readers: Mr. McGregor's garden. In *The Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies* (1909) we learn that Peter has grown up and is in the nursery business with his mother. They advertise special services: "Gardens Neatly Razed, Borders Devastated by the Night or Year." Benjamin has married Peter's sister Flopsy, and their offspring are the book's title characters. The bunnies appear in Mr. McGregor's garden with its box borders and elegant trellising. The geraniums have been restored to the McGregors' windowsill and marigolds bloom along their cottage wall.



Gardens neatly razed

Many gardeners remember *The Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies* best. It is not for the plot, which is slender. Nor is it for the charming garden illustrations based on the Burtons' garden at Gwynnynog. Instead the opening line sticks in the mind: "It is said that the effect of eating too much lettuce is 'soporific.'" Soporific stands out. Paired with an illustration of the six little rabbits in Mr. McGregor's lettuce patch, this wonderful word is a beacon to the botanically inclined. Beatrix had her sources for this pharmaceutical plant fact including the sixteenth-century *Herball* by John Gerard, a book she added to her own collection. She might have read the report by Scottish doctor Andrew Duncan on "Observations on the preparation of soporific medicines from garden lettuce," published in 1811. Whatever the original reference, Beatrix Potter transplanted it permanently into

children's literature.

Her garden did not sleep. Her perennials filled in to the point that she offered divisions to friends. She ordered hand-glasses, miniature greenhouses made of iron and glass, that looked like lanterns without bases. During cold snaps she set them over precious plants, and they seemed to speed up her propagation efforts, especially in spring. She thought of her garden even when she was back in London, so much so that she was driven outside to putter behind the house there. "I have been rolling the lawn in our back garden today ... I am very impatient to go up north and plant a few more shrubs before things begin to bud."



Soporific means sleepy

Not every shrub worked out. Beatrix discovered that gardening is an ongoing experiment, and sometimes a trial to one's patience. She waited and waited for one of the bushes she planted to bloom, then reported to a friend, "my specimen of that rubbishy bush flowered! And after waiting 4 years it was a sort of dirty maroon coloured flower, like a single holyhock, only not so handsome. Some samples

flowered at Mawson's nursery garden at Windermere also; Mr Mawson & I agreed that we would go without the flower in future rather than put up with such another summer for gardens!" She doesn't reveal the type of plant, though from her description it sounds like a member of the hibiscus family.



Beatrix looking over the wall in Sawrey, undated

Near Sawrey was her adopted home, if only part time, and the Hill Top garden sang its siren song. She wrote to Millie in 1910, "I am now taking a few days rest i.e. gardening violently when I ought to be sketching pigs." The people of the village were dear to her. She featured many of them along with the village's wisteria-bedecked shop in *The Tale of Ginger and Pickles* (1909). An aged wisteria vine also grew up Hill Top's façade, blooming exuberantly each spring.

Beatrix was infected with the gardener's imperialistic tendency. There is never enough space for all of the plants that one lusts after or the design ideas that come to mind. She was on the lookout for space to expand. When a farm across the road from Hill Top came on the market, she bought it. Castle Farm included a farmhouse, a cottage, and a pasture called Post Office Meadow. This time she was not going to overpay. She avoided that embarrassment by working with a local solicitor, Mr. William Heelis from Hawkshead.

Beatrix was pleased with Mr. Heelis, and with more than his legal counsel. In her journal decades earlier, she wrote of her cousin's

intended, saying, "Love in a cottage is sentimental, but the parties must be very pleasing to each other to make it tolerable." Willie was more than tolerable. In the winter of 1912, he proposed. He was tall, where Beatrix was short. Willie was athletic. He hunted, fished, bowled, and played golf. He was from a large family. He was a part of the country that Beatrix loved. Beatrix was forty-seven; her Willie was forty-one.

Is it surprising or predictable that her parents objected? He was beneath her, they argued. She should root him out of her life. Who were his people? While Heelis and Rupert Potter were in the same profession, a solicitor was hardly a barrister. And what of London society? Thankfully, brother Bertram intervened. Arriving in London from his country home in Scotland, he made the stunning announcement that he had been secretly married for ten years to Mary Welsh Scott, a farm girl he had met there. And they thought he had been occupied painting landscapes! Not long after, Beatrix and William are posing for a pre-wedding photograph in front of the flower border at Bolton Gardens. A fig tree is trained onto the wall behind them. They were married at St Mary Abbot's in Kensington on October 15, 1913. Beatrix remembered her Shakespeare, "What are the words in the 'Tempest'? 'Spring came to you at the farthest, in the latter end of the harvest.'" Having missed out on much happiness in the first half of her life, she was making up for it.



Beatrix Potter and William Heelis at No. 2 Bolton Gardens, on the eve

of their marriage, 1913



Castle Cottage, after the renovations, about 1914

With Willie, she was planted permanently in Sawrey. Rather than moving into Hill Top with its antique (read non-existent) indoor plumbing and close proximity to her tenants, the Heelises chose to expand Castle Cottage for their marital home, doubling its modest size. It would be their bastion, their keep. They hired a builder to open up the old front rooms, taking out partitions and breaking new doors into walls. They added a bathroom. Their upstairs bedroom, while not palatial, afforded a fine view of Hill Top across the road, where Beatrix still enjoyed gardening and drawing, writing and arranging her growing collection of antique furniture. Hill Top became a sort of still life into which she inserted bouquets from the garden as well as overnight guests. She continued to treat it as her special place, “a house of one’s own” that she had created as her first declaration of independence.



Pansies, watercolor with pencil, undated

A wise gardener once said that if husband and wife garden together they should have separate beds. In the case of the Heelises, Beatrix did most of the gardening, though Willie sometimes helped plant the vegetable seeds. She set box hedges around her garden beds at Castle Cottage, filling them with flowers: pansies and roses, bellflowers and phlox. As at Hill Top, she mixed in soft fruit, like currants and strawberries, and herbs like sage. It was “a regular old fashioned farm garden,” in keeping with the house. To Beatrix, calling a garden old fashioned was high praise.

The year of their marriage saw the publication of *The Tale of Pigling Bland* (1913), a charming romance with a small pig who sighs, “I wish I could have a little garden and grow potatoes.” Instead his overburdened mother sends Pigling and his brother Alexander to market—without a shopping list. Alexander, through a plot twist, is escorted home to Hill Top by a policeman, illustrated with a perfect view of the garden and the flagged walk to the house. Pigling’s many adventures and close calls end with his finding a mate, Pig-wig. The two appear in landscapes around Sawrey: at a signpost near Esthwaite and looking over a rolling view of hills and farms. Lest we read too much into the story, Beatrix wrote to a friend, “The portrait of two pigs arm in arm—looking at the sun-rise—is *not* a portrait of me & Mr Heelis, though it is a view of where we used to walk on Sunday afternoons! When I want to put William in a book—it will have to be as some very tall thin animal.” After *Pigling Bland*, Beatrix took a hiatus from writing. She enjoyed married life and her increasing

commitments to farm and garden, raising sheep and cows, chickens and turkeys, as well as flowers, fruits, and vegetables, on her 120 acres.

While Willie continued his law practice, Beatrix was in charge of the farm as well as the household. The farm manager checked with her every morning about the work planned for the day. Beatrix also made sure that meals were served promptly for her ever-appreciative husband. They enjoyed afternoon walks up to the tarns where Willie would fish—truth be told, poach—and Beatrix would row or paint. For the village, they must have been a baffling sort of gentry, living in a cottage but having retainers: a chauffeur and car for Beatrix, a housekeeper and a girl to help with the cooking, men to farm the land and help with the gardening.

Beatrix continued to be responsible for the endless logistics of aging parents. Her father declined quickly, dying the May after her marriage. With the start of the Great War in August 1914, Beatrix moved her mother close by, first in rented accommodations in Sawrey then, wisely, to the other side of Windermere. Her parents had taken Lindeth Howe as a summer's lease in the past, and now Mrs. Potter was installed there permanently with her London furniture, coach, horses, and servants. Mrs. Potter had a proper gardener, Benjamin Dawson, at Lindeth Howe. Her gardens included a peach house and greenhouse, lawns and bedding flowers, and the newly stylish herbaceous border.

Weekly, Mrs. Potter would arrive, driven by her liveried coachman like some imperious copy of Queen Victoria, and expect Beatrix to drop everything. Interrupted during the harvest Beatrix, on one occasion, jumped into the carriage with armfuls of corn. One can only imagine what her mother said to that.

In March 1916, short-handed from the war, Beatrix wrote a letter to *The Times* on employment opportunities for women in farm labor. She was unimpressed with the formation of the Women's National Land Service, an organization that trained and supervised women in agricultural jobs, and what she termed their "ridiculous and vulgar" uniforms. But she added, "I am perfectly ready to employ the right sort of woman." The letter was signed "A Woman Farmer."



Alexander follows the policeman up the garden walk to Hill Top from *The Tale of Pigling Bland*

She received a response from an applicant. Her name was Eleanor Louise Choyce, known as Louie. Beatrix, intrigued, enquired by return post about Miss Choyce's age and experience and detailed the work. "I have poultry, orchard, flower garden, vegetables (help with heavy digging, no glass), cooking here with the girl's assistance; Mrs C. I & this girl all help with hay, & I single turnips when I can find time, & look after some ... land on the fell." By April, Louie had arrived, accepting the offer of wages and lodgings at Hill Top. Louie wrote her mother at the end of May about the lilacs and azaleas. "I have never seen so many & so fine, it is perfectly beautiful." She described working with Mrs. Heelis, propagating Scotch broom collected on the fells and lavender cuttings from the garden. On their walks they collected foxglove leaves from wild plants, used during World War I to distill digitalin, a heart medication. She added, "I get up early but Mrs Heelis isn't a bit of a driver. She finds me odd jobs if it is too hot or wet to garden & never fusses. I simply do like her exceedingly."



Louie Choyce in later years, undated

Louie became a regular, coming back many summers to help. Gardening is a solitary occupation, often soothing for that reason. For a change it was a joy for Beatrix to have a kindred spirit working next to her in the garden. Louie brightened up the Heelis home as well, singing and playing Beatrix's piano. Beatrix and Willie called her their "singing bird." Just ten years younger than Beatrix, she started as an employee and ended a friend. She and Beatrix wrote to each other about their gardens and their families for the rest of their lives. While Beatrix always opened her letters with the formal salutation "Dear

Miss Choyce,” they are full of affection and flowers.

In 1917, the year after Louie Choyce first came to Sawrey, Beatrix’s publisher, Frederick Warne & Co., declared bankruptcy. Shocking. Harold Warne had borrowed from the coffers with the perhaps understandable intent of propping up another of the family businesses. He went to prison. Beatrix, with her deep-rooted attachment to the rest of the Warne family, agreed to some new work for the reorganized company. She spent time in 1918 on *The Tale of Johnny Town-Mouse*. She was really too busy to write and paint, but this she did—on top of the happiness of her married life, the demands of the farm, and the worries of the escalating war in Europe. There was a pall of family grief as well. She worked in the shadow of her brother’s sudden death on his farm in Scotland.

She and Bertram had both chosen country life over city, just as Timmy Willie did in *Johnny Town-Mouse*, an adaptation of a fable dedicated to “Aesop in the shadows.” Timmy Willie, a mouse born in a garden, is drawn among heartsease, small yellow-, purple-, and white-petaled pansies. Timmy finds a hamper of vegetables, particularly the peas, irresistible. In the illustration the hamper sits beside Hill Top’s green metal gate. Hijacked to town, Timmy is befriended by Johnny Town-Mouse, but yearns for home, “And when the sun comes out again,” he tells Johnny, “you should see my garden and the flowers—roses and pinks and pansies—no noise except the birds and bees, and the lambs in the meadows.” Timmy goes back to his garden. Johnny later visits, but finds Timmy’s life and lodgings too quiet. Beatrix closes the story with the statement, “For my part, I prefer to live in the country like Timmy Willie.”



Timmy Willie's garden with pinks and pansies

SETTING SEED



A COUNTRY MOUSE, Beatrix went native. As Mrs. Heelis she took on the customs and picked up, if not the accent, then at least the jargon of her new home. By living beyond the pale of London society, she jettisoned its obligations and conventions. Her costume changed to a straw hat for the garden, simple woolen jacket and skirt, and clogs or boots to lift her feet out of the mud. A cloudburst? There was sacking to throw over her shoulders. Sudden sunshine? She could tie a rhubarb leaf on top of her head. If villagers raised eyebrows at her wayward wardrobe, what did it matter? She was comfortable with herself, even if a glance in the mirror reminded her of one of the pigs.

In the garden Beatrix planted more roses, including a pink ‘Queen of Bourbons.’ Roses smothered the walls of Castle Cottage, their fragrance wafting into the open windows like an exhalation of summer. As at Hill Top, she planted a Japanese quince beloved for its early bloom. She tended ferns and alpine plants in her rockery. But as she got older, her garden sometimes got out of hand. To her cousin Caroline Clark, she confessed a Darwinian approach to gardening, calling it a case of the survival of the fittest. It was “always very full of flowers and weeds, presently it will be a sheet of self sown snow drops, and later on daffodils. It always seems too wet or too busy at the right time for digging over—consequently I just let the plants alone until they have to be divided, and small things like gentians have got crowded out.” Yet she couldn’t resist adding just a nugget of advice. “I think they [the gentians] will stand wet if you mix pebbles or old lime with the soil, for drainage.”



Beatrix Potter's "self-portrait," sepia ink and pencil, 1924

Beatrix enjoyed the fruits of her labor. By the 1920s she owned not only Hill Top and Castle Farm in Near Sawrey, but also Courier Farm. Courier Farm had a great expanse of fruit trees, dubbed by Beatrix "the orchard opposite the Castle." She had room to try different varieties of apples. Some were best eaten directly from the trees—Worcester Pearmain, Quarrendens from Devonshire—others, like the sour crabapples, were best preserved with plenty of sugar. She was a great preserver of fruit, making quantities of jams, jellies, and marmalades. To visitors, she served bread and preserves with tea, a simple country fare.

Margaret "Daisy" Hammond, the niece of one of her childhood governesses, moved to Sawrey in 1922 with her friend Cecily Mills. The two women rented the front half of the old Castle farmhouse and an adjoining cottage from Beatrix and became fast friends with their landlady. They were avid gardeners. One June when Daisy and Cecily were away, Beatrix was looking after their garden and temptation proved too great. She penned her confession in a letter to Daisy. "I have also thieved a few lettuces and some truly magnificent aquilegias," she admitted, "—never saw finer ones and more variety." She reported on their roses and described the honeysuckle, "hanging into the porch as though the house was uninhabited—or only tenanted by Sleeping Beauty!"

Beatrix proffered invitations to Willie's large family, and his siblings and their offspring arrived regularly to call on the couple. Ann

Lorraine, a grandniece, remembered wildflower walks with Aunt Beatrix, accompanied by the two Pekingese dogs that came into the household in 1936 and 1937, Tzusee and Chuleh. When asked the name of a plant, Beatrix quipped, "It's called Enchanter's Nightshade. It isn't a nightshade and it isn't at all enchanting, but apart from that I suppose it's quite a good name." (Enchanter's nightshade, *Circaea lutetiana*, is a prolific weed, related not to poison nightshade nor to the tomatoes, potatoes and eggplants that share its family, but to evening primroses and willowherb.) Beatrix passed on plant lore freely, in the same way she delivered flower posies from her garden to friends in the village.



Beatrix with her sheepdog Kep next to Hill Top's rockery, 1913



Honeysuckle, watercolor with pen and ink, about 1895

Beatrix the hostess was sometimes a contradiction. Usually publicity-averse, she enjoyed select appreciative callers, especially those from abroad. The first of these appeared in 1921. Anne Carroll Moore, a children's librarian from New York City, was assertive. Planning a trip to Grasmere, she contacted Warne and asked if Beatrix Potter would like to see photographs of French children and their grandmothers reading *Pierre Lapin* and *Jeannot Lapin*, the bunny books in translation. A rare invitation from Mrs. Heelis came by return post. Miss Moore arrived on a morning in June and walked up the long hill from the ferry. She remembered the wild roses in hedgerows and the fresh smell of mown grass. Beatrix came out of the hayfield, "looking for all the world as Beatrix Potter should look." By the time they walked up the lane, Moore felt as if she had always known her. Many years later, she recalled standing in the Castle Cottage garden, "The familiar flower garden of her picture books tempted us to linger there, for the foxgloves were in their glory."



Apples and quince, watercolor, 1880

Visitors enjoyed potted geraniums lining the windowsills outdoors in warm weather. These colorful slips of summer spent the off-season sunning themselves on the broad interior sills of Castle Cottage and Hill Top. Cacti joined them, not the spiny denizens of the desert, but the jungle varieties. Orchid cactus was a particular favorite, and Beatrix exchanged different types and colors with Louie Choyce, sometimes sending cuttings through the mail. The plants, hybrid epiphyllums, are easy to propagate. With patience, small pieces of the green leathery leaves will root and eventually bloom in a range of ruddy colors—magenta, fuchsia, salmon—like red paint mixed with different amounts of blue and yellow. One summer, Beatrix wrote, “Thank you for the cutting I hope it may be lucky. I am very fond of cacti, and with half doz pots there are always two or more that flower—though the largest scarlet is only every 4th year.”

A small but steady stream of visitors found their way to into her garden over the coming years, looking for Peter Rabbit and his creator. Marian Perry came from Philadelphia and became a friend for life. The Coolidge family arrived from Massachusetts with well-behaved children in tow. Beatrix recognized like-minded individuals in these friends from across the sea. She showed them her flowers and furniture, her artwork and animals. “They appreciated the memories of old times, the simple country pleasures—the homely beauty of the old farm house, the sublime beauty of the silent lonely hills,” Beatrix wrote.



Foxgloves, watercolor with pen and ink, about 1903



Beatrix Potter in the garden at Hill Top, 1913

Her American friends sent her books. From Marian Perry, she particularly enjoyed Sarah Orne Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs* with its piecework narrative set in the woods and village gardens of Maine. One visitor, Alexander McKay, was a Philadelphia publisher. He sent her the poems of Joyce Kilmer. She thanked him for the beautiful book, and added, "There are other verses as good as "Trees"—almost." (The poem to which she refers begins, "I think that I shall never see / A poem as lovely as a tree.") Henry P., one of the Coolidge children, convinced Beatrix to share a new set of stories with an American audience.



Orchid cactus, watercolor, 1886

Beatrix Potter had stories in reserve. As she put it, “Through many changing seasons, these tales have walked and talked with me.” *The Fairy Caravan*, published in 1929, was a set of interconnecting tales, threaded together by a magic circus. The book is a dog and pony show, literally, run by Sandy, a West Highland terrier, and Pony Billy. *Caravan* is full of plants, almost a catalog of wild flowers of the North Country. It describes her sheep and her sheepdogs, the smithy and his forge, the weavers and their rhymes, the farms and orchards of her home place. A very personal book, she wove in the birds and blooms of memory, writing of the old gardens and woodland of her grandparents’ home at Camfield Place.



Xarifa's birthplace among the primroses in *The Fairy Caravan*

Just as Beatrix did not rest on her writing laurels, she was also not finished with land and garden acquisitions. In 1923 Troutbeck Park Farm, encompassing over two thousand acres on the opposite shore of Windermere, had come on the market. Beatrix knew the place, had known it for thirty years, with its river valley and becks, its tableland and bulwark of high fells. She had, in the 1890s, looked for fossils there. Now she bought it, and paid farm managers and a sheep expert, Tom Storey, to rebuild it and its herd. Beatrix built her own expertise in Herdwick sheep, an ancient hardy stock that was well suited to the lean life on the mountain fells. She became a regular at agricultural shows, showing the best of her rams and ewes. In 1930 she was elected president of the Herdwick Sheep Breeders' Association.



Tom Storey with Herdwick sheep, undated



Cow, pen and ink with pencil, undated

While Beatrix liked the traditional ways, she considered herself forward thinking, a scientific farmer. She was entering an era of farming with the magic of modern chemicals. She used a new drug to combat liver fluke in her sheep flock. In one letter she informed Louie Choyce, "I used a weed killer for the first time at Hill Top in the stone paving, it was said to be non-arsenical and probably was harmless—it did *not* kill deep rooted weeds!" She tried ammonium sulphate, a fertilizer, to green up the pastures earlier. She corresponded with other farmers on methods for improving her cattle herd. When bracken spread to the point of invasiveness, she acquired a set of mechanical bracken crushers to share with her tenant farms. Though nostalgic for the draft horses, she bought a tractor and a motorized mower.

Beatrix's life bridged from the age of steam and railroads to the age of the internal combustion engine. Not all of this change was to her liking. She sold drawings to her American friends to raise funds to prevent the development of a strip of lakeshore on Windermere. She wrote to *The Times*, decrying an airplane factory and its noisy test flights. She supported those who protested against widening the road that passed through Wordsworth's daffodil fields. "This little corner of the country should be kept unchanged for people who appreciate its beauty," wrote Beatrix to Marian Perry in 1928.

In 1930, she acquired another huge estate, Monk Coniston, with proceeds from *The Fairy Caravan*. Now interested in genealogy, her own roots, Beatrix was particularly attracted to Monk Coniston because it included a parcel once owned by her great-grandfather. While it might seem that she was working her way to becoming a land baron, or baroness if you will, Beatrix Potter had a higher purpose in mind. She had stayed involved with her old friend Hardwicke Rawnsley's efforts to conserve the Lake District and, more broadly, sites of history and natural beauty around England. After he founded the National Trust in 1895, Beatrix was a supporter in word and deed. This was, in a sense, landscaping on a regional scale. "I'm sure I am doing good in trying to save anything I can of our Lake country from being vulgarized," she wrote, "For, as true education advances, the beauty of unspoilt nature will be appreciated; and it would be a pity if the appreciation came too late." From her childhood romps through Camfield and Dalguise to her wanderings around the misty hills and valleys of her adopted Lakes, she treasured her home ground. With Willie, she arranged that all of their real estate would go to the National Trust after they both died.

Between now and then, there was more hands-on gardening to do. She was still "the busy Bee" as her uncle Hutton called her in her twenties. Through Willie, she had gotten to know an expatriate

American, Rebecca Owen, who lived at Belmont Hall, a stately Georgian house between Hawkshead and Ambleside. Miss Owen, a unique individual in all respects, eventually decamped to Rome and sold Belmont to Beatrix in 1938. It seems that Beatrix had been itching to get her hands on the garden. She wrote to cousin Caroline the next year reporting, “My eccentric old friend Miss Owen has died in Rome ... so I have a free hand in an old walled garden of over an acre.” It was like having a new sketchbook, or perhaps more like being presented with one of her Peter Rabbit painting books, as the outlines were there. Along the garden walls at Belmont azaleas bloomed. Spring bulbs were a carpet, a dream. But the old fan-trained fruit trees were verging on decrepit, and Beatrix trained clematis into them to hide their flaws. She put in new flowering shrubs to eventually take their place.



“This little corner of the country,” watercolor with pencil, 1912

Shrub planting seems to increase proportionally with a gardener’s age. Flowering shrubs are more self-reliant than perennials, requiring fewer horticultural interventions. Beatrix, now seventy-three, remembered Caroline saying she was “going in for shrubs—and for the same reason.” She asked Caroline about *Chimonanthus fragrans*, wintersweet. Did Caroline think it would grow at Belmont? (Interesting that in this case, Beatrix made an exception to her usual avoidance of botanical nomenclature.) She had already planted *Ceanothus*—California lilac. She stated, as if for the record, “I should like to plant some bushes that might grow on at Belmont Hall without much attention.” Woody plants tend to live longer, especially untended, than herbaceous perennials, an attribute devoutly to be

wished for an older gardener.

Beatrix was feeling her “anno domini.” In 1938, she had some gynecological procedures in the Women’s Hospital in Liverpool. She came home but soon landed back in hospital. With the doctors recommending a difficult hysterectomy, she left detailed instructions in the event she did not recover. She made up lists for Willie, and to her friends she wrote, “I have failed in strength more than people know this last 2 years. Most times it has been an effort to walk to Hill Top. I am so glad I was feeling particularly well last week; and I have seen the snowdrops again.” But recover she did. It was hard to keep her down. She observed, “I am always better on fine days when I can work in the garden.” She was joined in the garden by her two little dogs, playing hide and seek around the boxwood hedges.

Not long after her return home, World War II descended even on distant Sawrey. Men and boys joined up. The Ministry of Agriculture asked for more plowing and more potatoes. The Heelises blacked out their windows at dusk. Relatives of Beatrix, the Hyde Parkers, turned over their manor house to the army and moved into Hill Top. Bombs fell, though much less in the country than the cities. There was worry of invasion. Willie signed up as a local warden as he had during the last war, though Beatrix felt he was better suited to the Agricultural Committee than patrolling nights wearing a tin hat. “And the rest of us ‘carry on’, and grow sheep and cabbages and rabbits,” Beatrix wrote to an American friend. She was undaunted. “What a pretty country it is at the Lakes is it not? Hitler cannot spoil the fells; the rocks and fern and lakes and waterfalls will outlast us all.”



Clematis, watercolor, undated

She did not outlast the war. On December 22, 1943, weakened from influenza and fighting bronchitis, her heart gave out. She was seventy-seven years old. Beatrix Potter Heelis died in her bed with Willie at her side. Just three weeks before, she had written to Louie of one of her last forays into the garden, “I am still under the weather. We had some really fine dry frosts, but I was disappointed to find I was not ready to stand the cold—it was really severe frost—so I got a cough again, but it did not last long. Today has been pleasant sunshine. I have been pruning creepers against the wall in the sun here.”

Her friend, Tom Storey, spread her ashes in an undisclosed location on her land in Sawrey. Tradition has it that it was on the little hill overlooking the farmhouse at Hill Top. She would merge with the soil, down-to-earth to the last. The best of stewards for the land, in her will she left over four thousand acres to the National Trust, retaining some life interest in the properties for her spouse. William Heelis died in August 1945, only eighteen months after his wife's passing. Our access to the views, the lakes and hills, the cottages and pastures of Cumbria, are thanks in great part to Beatrix Potter and her *Tales*. The lakesides are not strewn with holiday cottages. The jagged vertebrae of the fells are free of vacation homes perched on unlikely heights. She left a legacy of land as well as words and pictures.



Beatrix in the doorway at Castle Cottage, undated



Beatrix with one of her Pekingese dogs in the garden at Castle Cottage, 1930

She also left a garden. It frames Hill Top, it ushers visitors in, and while no garden can remain frozen in time, it is a living link to a remarkable woman and her interest in plants and gardening.

PART TWO

**The Year in Beatrix Potter's
Gardens**





Violets, watercolor with pencil, undated

IF BEATRIX POTTER kept a garden journal, it did not survive. Perhaps it was destroyed after her death according to her wishes, along with the many letters she received from friends, fans, and relations. Perhaps it, along with nursery catalogs, garden magazines, and books, went to a waste-paper collection during World War II. "I have been sorting papers and books this afternoon—a perplexing task as regards books," Beatrix wrote to Anne Carroll Moore in the winter of 1942. "'Salvage drives' are a craze; at the present moment being overdone. Things are being destroyed that ought not to be." Many of her gardening books were dispersed after her death, so perhaps more information will surface to the delight of some future garden historian. Meanwhile let us garden with Beatrix Potter through the seasons, informed by her writing, artwork, and photographs past and present.

WINTER



“There has been some lovely weather—to look at.”

WINTER PERCHES on Sawrey like a large black bird. The nights draw out into the darkness of the north, cut by glow of lamplight and the smell of fireplaces burning wood and coal in the village cottages. It is the selva of the year.

The weather can be wild with gales, closing down the ferry and stranding passengers and freight for days. Chimneys moan with wind. Pipes freeze and burst. The roads are treacherous. One hopes for a dry, crisp frost, but more often it is, to use Beatrix’s term, “sloshy,” with cold fog hanging in the dark valleys. Like an annoying guest that keeps postponing departure, the short days of winter hang on, and on.

At least the frost serves a purpose for farm and garden. On her bookshelf is H. Rider Haggard’s *A Farmer’s Year*, in which a winter entry reads, “frost in moderation is a good thing for the land, as it pulverizes the earth and destroys noxious insects by the thousands.” And it is pretty to see the villagers skating on Esthwaite Water. As one of the shallower lakes, it freezes quickly.



Hill Top on a wintry night, watercolor, about 1910



Footprints in the snow, watercolor with pencil, 1909



Hill Top's orchard in the snow

While one can always hope for a “green winter,” if the weather pulls up cold and wet from the “low east,” there is heavy, drifting snow. Up in the peaks and crags and fells, blizzards can trap sheep, sending the shepherds and their dogs to the uplands to dig them out. The more dependent livestock, cows and horses under cover for the winter, need feeding, and Beatrix the farmer keeps an eye on the supply of hay. Walking back from the barn, her eyes absorb the silent snowy landscape reflecting blue light.

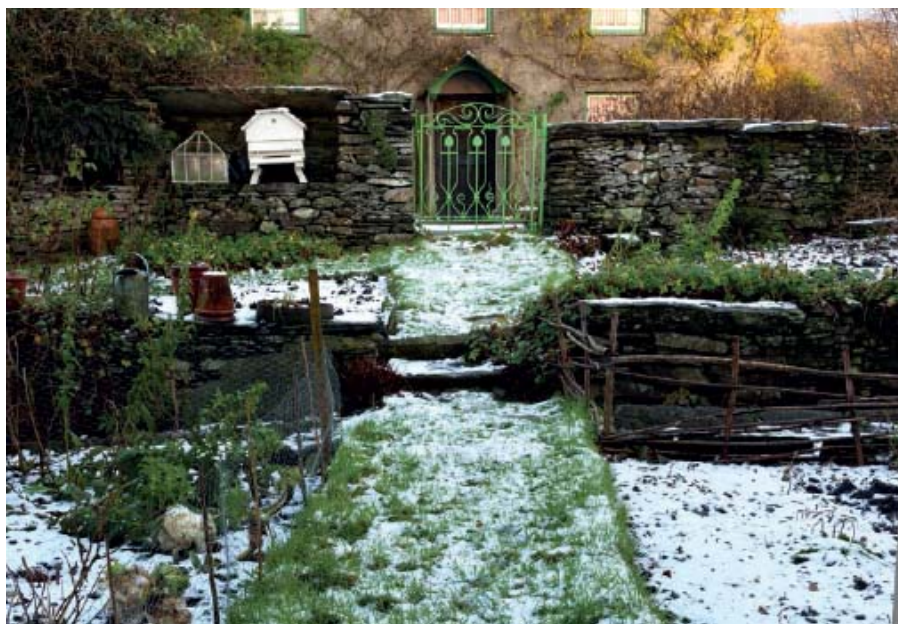
In her garden, structure dominates. The garden's skeleton is laid bare. Beatrix's investment in its bones is repaid in winter. At Hill Top, the long trellis acts as a spine. Snow clings to it. The stacked stone walls of the vegetable garden are gray; the green wrought iron gate is a shot of color. The walls and stone paving maintain the spatial set of the garden, just as in Beatrix Potter's illustrations the backgrounds, natural and architectural, frame the characters. At Castle Cottage the beds are outlined in trimmed evergreen boxwood hedges; at Hill Top they are edged in slate. The houses, Hill Top's gray pebble-dash with green trim and Castle Cottage's buff with pink, take on a significance in the winter garden in proportion to their importance for comfort and survival. Structures stand up to the season, design-wise.



The green gate at Hill Top



Castle Cottage



Hill Top's vegetable garden in winter



Hill Top's garden trellis



The handle of a spade at Hill Top

Garden tools take on a quality of still life. A wooden spade handle stands out in relief. A wheelbarrow is sculptural.

The garden's woody plants—its trees and shrubs—are unveiled. The deciduous tribe drops its leaves. Looking at the bare outlines of her garden shrubs in winter, Beatrix observes the way they grow: the honeysuckle opposite-branched, with side shoots developing off the main stem in pairs; the azaleas alternate-branched, with shoots offset.

Nature, ever thrifty, repeats the pattern at a larger scale in the trees around Sawrey: ash–opposite; oak–alternate; maple–opposite; beech–alternate. Beatrix writes, in 1937, to an artist protégé, Delmar Banner: “We can tell every tree in winter without reference to foliage by its mode of growth. So study them in some spare moments, ... they will repay—they are in the right place as beautiful as rocks. They have a nobility of growth which is usually entirely overlooked.”



Hill Top's wooden wheelbarrow

The evergreens take a lead role. Across the rest of the year, you might call them retiring, their green needles fading into the background with the distractions of flowers, fruit, or foliage. In winter, especially with a dusting of snow, their dark color and strong contours stand out. Close to the road at Hill Top, a Scotch pine with red bark and bluish needles defines the garden in winter. Large enough to be seen from Castle Cottage, the tree is a visual connection between the two halves of Beatrix Potter's horticultural whole.

Other details too subtle to notice in the growing season move forward. The roots of the older apple trees at Hill Top and in the orchard across from the Castle look like arteries, penetrating the ground. Their bark stands out like the plates on a turtle shell. In the garden the lilac's bark is smooth and gray. Dried seeds and stalks on plants like meadow rue and goatsbeard stand up to a good bit of weather, though by leaving them the gardener contends with a bigger spread of seedlings the following year. The robins, sedentary birds, add a spot of color and movement in the winter garden.



Dried seedpods



A robin in the winter garden



The morning frost lights the remains of last year's plants



Leaves of the roses, edged in frost

On the rose canes, frost outlines the remnant leaves. Shriveled red hips and recurving thorns add interest. To be botanically correct, the sharp bits on roses are called prickles. Beatrix Potter would have enjoyed the term, as she particularly liked the sound of its rhyme, pickle.

Little bulbs that would be overlooked in the peak season have their day. The snowdrops are improbable if not preposterous. Their leaves brush off the descent of winter, Beatrix reporting their “noses” emerging as early as October. As the season progresses, they slice through soil frozen solid, making the gardener question their motivation. The small, bell-shaped flowers opening on wiry stems seem to ring in the New Year. Each flower has three white outer petals that hang down like three drops of cream, appropriately enough as the botanical name, *Galanthus*, is from the Greek for “milk” and “flower.”



Rose hips, watercolor, about 1878

Varieties differ in small ways. Are there green markings on the outer petals? Are the petals narrow? Do they have a yellowish or greenish hue? These minutiae are of great interest to snowdrop enthusiasts, though practical-minded Beatrix sticks to the common species, *Galanthus nivalis*. Still, as she collects other things, oak furniture in particular, she would have sympathized with these galanthophiles.



Snowdrops, watercolor, undated



From *Peter Rabbit's Almanac for 1929*

One might wonder what all the fuss is about, as snowdrops seem like the runts of the bulb world litter. The largest tops out at about twenty-six centimeters or ten inches tall. Their appeal is in their shape, their pristine color, and their sense of timing. Snowdrops bloom when there is little floral competition. This is the flower that Beatrix most often mentions in her letters, though snowdrops do not appear in any of her books save *Peter Rabbit's Almanac for 1929*, assembled from spare drawings. With the exception of the wintery *Tailor of Gloucester* and one chapter (out of twenty-three) in *The Fairy Caravan*, she set her stories in a perpetually sunny garden balanced at its late-spring to early-summer peak.



Snowdrops at Hill Top

Looking out onto her own garden one February, Beatrix admires the snowdrops. “There are thousands in front of the windows and in the orchard and in the lane. That is why I have an untidy garden. I won’t have the dear things dug up in summer, they are so much prettier growing in natural clumps, instead of being dried off and planted singly.” Snowdrops have the bonus of being prolific self-sowers. Where they are happy, given undisturbed soil and some patience, you too can have your thousands.

Beatrix’s thousands of snowdrops harmonize with the outdoor palette in their green-and-white color scheme. But for a vivid touch in the bleak midwinter, Beatrix adds yellow aconite and crocus. Their brightness seems to vibrate. Their splashy hue signals the earliest pollinators. For gardeners, yellow is the starting pistol for the race to the growing season.



Cloth-of-gold crocus

The early-blooming yellow crocus at Castle Cottage push up on pallid tubes in February from corms, solid little parcels that store food over their long dormancy. While she doesn't say, perhaps Beatrix planted them in the small lawn, as these early crocus are amenable to naturalizing in the grass. Their foliage matures well before the lawn needs to be mowed. They were probably the cloth-of-gold crocus, so-called because they reminded the namer of fabric woven with a gold-wrapped weft.

Winter aconites grow from unlikely little tubers that look strangely reminiscent of droppings from Beatrix's ever-present pet rabbits. She no doubt planted her aconites in a visible spot, along a path or in a direct view from a window or door of Castle Cottage where they would lie undisturbed during their dormancy the rest of the year. Their buttercup flowers—they are in the same family as summer buttercups—deign to open only on sunny winter days. They are worth the wait. As someone who did embroidery and made moveable paper toys for children, Beatrix would have appreciated the finely cut collars of strappy green leaves that encircle the yellow petals.



Witch-hazel

The aconites in her garden have a matching neighbor, the first shrub to bloom in the annual cycle at Castle Cottage. With its low arching branches, winter jasmine—Beatrix calls it “jessamine”—is perfect for growing over a low slate wall. Its yellow buds open on bare wood. Leaves come later. It is a spreader, setting roots wherever it touches the ground. Beatrix may have gotten it from a gardening friend, as it is so easy to share. Its only fault is a tendency to catch leaves, the way Mr. Jeremy Fisher accidentally snagged a stickleback. Winter jasmine catches so much detritus that it needs to be cleaned out in late winter to look its best.



Garden path at Hill Top

The unruly petals of a Chinese witch-hazel bush add to the yellow festivities in her late winter garden. As a bonus, Beatrix could step out her door on a sunny February morning to enjoy the fragrance of the witch-hazel. Spicy and sharp, it is understandable that someone thought to distill its cousin, the American witch-hazel, into an astringent.



The darling buds of winter

Winter wipes the gardener's slate clean. In Beatrix Potter's sometimes-messy garden everything herbaceous dies back, including the weeds. The beds that do not get dug will still be there next year.

Among Beatrix Potter's possessions left at Hill Top is a 1911 catalog from Fox Hill Hardy Plant Nursery in Kent. How could any gardener resist the title "Novelties of New and Rare Plants Supplement to the Catalogue of 1911"? It boasted selections of "the best narcissi, late and early flowering tulips and forcing bulbs." Beatrix kept it through all the years, treasuring its litany of flowers—just the thing to page through on a dreary cold day.

Winter is a time of watching. "I have stopped indoors since the snow, except just feeding birds in the garden." The progress of buds is monitored. For a taste of summer, at least the jam cupboard is well stocked. When the sun finally rises earlier than Beatrix does, she knows that spring can't be far off. "March has come in—like a polar bear! So it may go out as a lamb. The snow is not much but the wind is bitter. The week before was really fine, quite warm in the sun. I was doing a bit of gardening at Hill Top and it was almost hot under the wall." Bliss.

SPRING



“You are as welcome as the flowers of spring!”

IF THERE IS NO SETBACK, spring can elbow its way in by the first week of April. Compared to the gardens of her friends in warmer parts of England, Beatrix’s garden is often “more backward.” Branches remain bare, the leaves and flowers seem stubborn in their refusal to open. A late snow is not unknown, a reminder that this is north, Beatrix Potter’s true north. “Today is mild and ‘growy’ quite a spring smell” she writes to a friend, “let’s hope it has not come a fortnight too soon!” As the ground begins to thaw and the sun moves higher in its arc, the new season exhales.

On the roadsides and in the open woodlands around Sawrey, the English primroses push up in the grass with their pale yellow petals and bright yellow centers. This is the first wildflower in abundance, and must have been for the Romans as well, the word “primrose” coming from the Latin for first, *prima*, and rose, *rosa*. They are well settled in around this valley with its moist, acidic soil. In *The Tale of Little Pig Robinson*, the last official tale published by F. Warne & Co. in 1930, the soon-to-be-shanghaied pig picked a bunch of primroses to sell in the market at Stymouth.



English primroses, watercolor with pencil, undated



Hawthorn in bloom, watercolor with pen and ink, undated

Primroses and other wildflowers—violets and lady's smock—bloom under the hedgerows, living fences planted by generations of fell farmers. Their utilitarian function aside, hedgerows have created a unique habitat for plants and animals. They come alive in spring. Pointed beech buds unfurl into fresh leaves. Hawthorn, black thorn, and sloe thorn open in succession with their frothy flowers. Beatrix waits for "black thorn winter," a cold snap that seems to coincide with the bloom.

Post Office Meadow, on the slope between Castle Cottage and Hill Top, is full of tiny lawn daisies. Beatrix listens for the first cuckoo call, another sure mark of the season. Above Far Sawrey one of the woodlands is called Cuckoo Brow Woods. Walking there, she can hear the bright chattering sound of Wilfin Beck, running fast and clear from the snowmelt in the uplands. March is the month of mud. The dirt roads and lanes are slick. "It has been so dirty in the fields it nearly pulls my big boots off."

It is a good time for pruning the evergreens in her garden—the laurels and the like—and the roses. The woody plants are just about to break dormancy, rousing up like some heroine from the Brothers Grimm. A haircut will energize them for the growing season, though for a while they look like newly shorn sheep. For the flowering shrubs she will wait until after they bloom to avoid cutting off this year's buds. In fact, the honeysuckle bush is open by now. Its little flowers would not be worth having if not for the sweet smell that they exude on sunny, cool March mornings.

Up on the fells, the Scotch broom is just starting its yellow sweep across the landscape. It blooms on erect green stems with vertical brushstrokes. The plant's yellow flowers are like butterflies: five petals divided into an upright banner, two outfacing wings, and two in the center forming a keel. Beatrix has invited Scotch broom into her garden. All of its pea family relations that are already there—wisteria, sweet peas, beans—share the same flower shape. The plants are starting to get a bit out of hand in her richer garden soil, but she decides to leave them in for at least one more year.

To another friend planning a visit, Beatrix suggests holding off until later into April “for the wild daffies do not like the winds of *March* in the north.” William Wordsworth made Windermere's wild daffodils famous a century before Beatrix moved there. In 1804 he enshrined that host of golden daffodils along its eastern shore in his poetry: “Beside the lake, beneath the trees, / Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.” They bloom in Sawrey courtesy of Beatrix Potter.

Wild daffodils grace her uncle's garden in Wales, and Beatrix transplants some from there in 1906, writing to Millie, “I am going to get some of the wild daffodil bulbs which grow in thousands here. They grow about Windermere but there are none in my orchard, though plenty of wild snowdrops.” Beatrix remembers them from Easters past. On family vacations to the sea, she saw children selling cheerful bunches of “Lent lilies.” She adapts this years later when she has Pig Robinson pick a bunch for market and call out, “Who'll come and buy my eggs and daffodillies?”

These wild daffodils are a so-called straight species, *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* to those not befuddled by Latin binomials. *Homo sapiens* have not meddled with them by selecting or hybridizing. While not native to the Lakes, botanists and garden historians speculate that the Romans introduced the wild daffodils to Great Britain, as their nativity is Mediterranean. The daffodils have certainly made themselves at home in the Lake District.



Daffodils in front of Castle Cottage

While Beatrix sang the charms of the wild daffodil, she grows many cultivated varieties in her flowerbeds. Plant people have been always been a restless lot, seeking unusual traits that will show and sell well, rather like breeders of dogs or Herdwick sheep. The daffodil has been the target of centuries of unnatural selection. They come tall and short, early and late. The central cup, or corona, can be long, as in trumpet daffodils, or short as in flat-cupped. Some have a windblown look, with the outer petals swept back. The inner corona and outer perianth can be the same color or contrasting, in combinations of yellow, white, orange and red, even pink and green. In *The Fairy Caravan*, Beatrix pointed out daffodils that were “the big bunchy tame ones that we call ‘Butter-and-eggs.’” With enough different kinds, Beatrix has them blooming in the garden for at least two months in spring. Some, like the tazettas, are so fragrant that with just a few cut stems, the entire house will smell sweet.



Post Office Meadow, ready for grazing

Even though Beatrix herself never traveled beyond Great Britain, she assembled a garden of plants that was geographically diverse. Just as Pig Robinson sailed to the land of the Bong Tree, Sir Joseph Banks introduced Japanese quince, or japonica, to England in 1796. She remembers it from her trip to Salisbury, so many years ago, with her parents. The quince flowers early against Hill Top's front wall, its sweet coral buds opening before the leaves emerge.

Spring rains and warmer temperatures bring on a rush of new grass. For a farmer like Beatrix Potter, the growth is more than welcome. From the fells where the Herdwick sheep overwinter, ewes are brought down to "intakes," walled pastures where the new lambs are born in April. The ewes rely on fresh grass to ensure ample milk. The hay for the cows and horses in the barn has almost run out, and the livestock are let out into the pastures once again. The wild cherries in the woods are a haze of white blossoms. The hazel bushes in the coppices and hedgerows sway with drooping catkins. Birds nest in her garden.

Beatrix Potter could be called a locavore, though she might have found the term pretentious, eating out of her own larder and locally sourcing from the village shops and farmers. In order to have vegetables for the table, Beatrix starts as early as the garden soil can be worked. It is a time to plant, quoting Ecclesiastes in her King James Bible. In her garden Beatrix picks up a handful of soil. Compress in

fist; disperse through fingers. Friability is the question. Too wet and the seeds will rot. The walls around the Hill Top vegetable beds reflect the spring sun and dry the soil out earlier than the rest of the garden.



Rabbit holding a cauliflower from *Peter Rabbit's Almanac for 1929*

The cool-weather crops are ready to go in. Cabbages like the cold, along with their cousins, broccoli and cauliflower, and Beatrix plants all three. Turnip seed can be planted. After they germinate and grow on for a few weeks, when she has time Beatrix “single[s] the turnips,” pulling out the extras to give each seedling its own space, room for their roots to fill out. And it is time for lettuces and other greens.

Every spring Beatrix fulfills Pigling Bland’s wish for a little garden to grow potatoes. Her potatoes are ready to be planted, preferring the cool spring days. The seed potatoes that go in the ground now were saved in the cellar from last year’s crop. Only a few eyes, the growth buds, are necessary to get each new plant started. Beatrix can “chit”

them in late winter to give them a head start. Exposing the blunt ends of the seed potatoes to light encourages them to sprout. In the garden she might mix a handful of old mortar into the soil, not for the lime—potatoes prefer acidic soil, and lime “sweetens” it, raising the soil pH—but for the calcium. She lays them in the trenched soil carefully, shoots up, and covers them over. If any potatoes have softened or are too small to plant, the Hill Top pigs will be glad to oblige. On a farm nothing goes to waste.



Timmy Willie asleep among peas from *The Tale of Johnny Town-Mouse*

The sooner the peas are planted, the better. When they aren't in by mid-April, Beatrix describes herself as “behindhand.” The taste of spring peas, fresh picked, is a phenomenon. If the weather cooperates and she has time to put in a second sowing, she can sometimes get a second crop of peas. Succession planting is a great idea in principle, though the mice seem to eat them as fast as she puts them into the ground. She noted mice eating peas in more than one of her tales. Still, some of the peas take hold and spiral up the pea stakes, branchy twigs saved from pruning that she has stuck in the ground beside the plants.

Beatrix's feelings about animals shifted somewhat over time in proportion to the upswing in her gardening enthusiasms. She did not entirely switch allegiance from Peter to Mr. McGregor, but on occasion she came to view animals as pests instead of pets.

The birds that strip the flowers from her fruit trees incur her wrath. "Plum blossom was destroyed last spring by the bullfinches," she complains. "They have become a perfect nuisance, they stripped the buds from the currant & gooseberry bushes too." As an experienced gardener, Beatrix knows that no buds equals no fruit for the coming season. She is left with that violated feeling. Of the birds responsible, she writes, "They are very pretty, but they really want shooting, whether protected or not." The deer usually keep to the woods, but occasionally do "a lot of mischief" in the potato or turnip fields. One night sheep get into the walled garden at Hill Top and eat the middle out of every cabbage. Even the chickens get into the act. When the seed goes in she has to move the Hill Top flock, in particular a hen named Fenella, over to Castle Cottage so they won't scratch up the newly planted beds. And then there are the rabbits.



Beatrix Potter in Bolton Gardens holding her pet rabbit, Benjamin Bouncer, 1890. Note the wire mesh protecting the plants.

Rabbits were her special pets growing up and into adulthood. She always had a few hutch rabbits for young visitors who expected “Miss Potter” to have bunnies on hand. But she did not appreciate wild rabbits in the garden. She shared a poem, doggerel really, with her friend, Marian Perry. Perry later wrote it out from memory. It is entitled, “How to Lose Furry Friends:”

When I was still in my infant glory
And delighted in many a bed-time story,
No fairy-princess could quite compare

With the furry friends from a leafy lair.
Flopsy, Mopsy, Cotton-tail, Peter.
The last of whom was my special hero,
Who dared to defy the rustic Nero,
That wicked Monster, the mean old beggar
That horrible ogre—Mr McGregor.

But now that I'm a bit too hoary
To lose myself in a bed-time story,
I've slightly altered my firm conviction
Regarding my furry friends from fiction;
And might not weep at a grim autopsy
Oh Peter, Cotton-tail, Mopsy, Flopsy.
All of whom plus countless dozens
Of nameless ravenous rabbit cousins,
Pay frequent calls on my straggling garden—
Mr McGregor, I beg your pardon.



Rhubarb emerging in the Hill Top garden

At least the pests leave the rhubarb alone, no doubt deterred by the oxalic acid in its leaves. The rhubarb crop is coming on, its crowns uncurling into large sturdy leaves. She picks some young, discarding everything except the thick central stems to use for cooking. When the rhubarb is more mature, the stems will be less stringy if peeled. In her well-used copy of *Mrs. Beeton's Cookery Book* Beatrix reads, "This is one of the most useful of all garden productions that are put into pies and puddings Rhubarb comes in season when apples are going

out.” The apple supply at Castle Cottage is dwindling by this time of year, but the last few apples are especially good cooked with the rhubarb, their sweetness balancing the tart flavor of the stems. Jemima, or some later puddle-duck, could have easily nested in the big patch, though she might have gotten huffy when it was time to harvest for the evening’s pudding. Rhubarb likes fertile soil, so the addition of manure, duck or otherwise, keeps the patch going year after year.



Hill Top’s lilacs

The seeds of the annual flowers that Beatrix collected last fall can go into the ground. While she works, she is supervised by a robin, like the one she drew with Peter Rabbit’s shoe in the potato patch. It watches her with “bright little beady eyes, and a very red cap—no, not a cap, a red waistcoat,” waiting for her to turn the soil and expose fresh worms. It flutters away into a tree and keeps a lookout, warbling its song, twittering in alarm at the silent appearance of one of the cats.

By mid to late May, the black buds of the lilacs open with their lush panicles of bloom and heady aroma. Their heart-shaped leaves precede the blooms, adding a green underpinning. Lilacs are long-lived plants, and one antique shrub works its roots under the parlor floor at Hill Top, lifting up the floorboards. To keep the lilacs a manageable height, where the blooms can be enjoyed by those smaller in stature than Mr. Heelis, Beatrix prunes them as soon as the bloom is over, taking out the oldest branch or two every year to encourage new, shorter growth. Some she leaves tall, draping luxuriously over

the wall of the kitchen garden in the front of Hill Top.

Azaleas, the deciduous variety, bloom in the shade of her lilacs, in pinks and yellows and—heavens!—even orange. They are showier than the smaller evergreen hybrids that are typical in gardens today, as the blooms are larger and open on bare branches ahead of the leaves. And they are wonderfully fragrant. Happy in Hill Top's acidic soil, azaleas, and their evergreen cousins, the rhododendrons, are among the first shrubs that Beatrix mentions planting in her garden.

The ferns near the rockery unfurl their croziers. The little alpine plants have a better chance in the protected crevices she has created in the corner near the farm gate. Sea thrift, with flowers small, round, and pink, nods in the breeze agreeably. The gentians and tiny saxifrages, the rock plants and succulents can send their roots down undisturbed. In the larger garden beds, the hardy perennials would crowd out the alpiners. Sometimes she grows little plants in an old stone horse trough; now that they have fewer horses and more motors, the troughs might as well be put to an alternate good use.



Hill Top's spring façade

The garden primroses are starting to bloom. A gaggle of candelabra primroses cluster at the feet of the azalea, their tall flower spikes sturdy over rosettes of green leaves. They have expanded year by year, and as they are easy to divide she shares some with Millie. They self-sow when they are happy, as they seem to be at Hill Top. Beatrix also grows polyanthus primroses; with the white around their petals they look like they are trimmed in lace. She likes to gather little bunches for arrangements to adorn favorite pieces of furniture.



A period photograph of the Hill Top garden in spring, undated

Among the fading bulbs, the summer perennials are jostling their way through the soil, breaking dormancy and bulking up in anticipation of a later display. The gaps are filled with self-sowing biennials. A haze of forget-me-nots, each flower blue and yellow—complementary colors from nature’s palette—settles in every year. Taller honesty blooms in pink, or sometimes in white. Their flowers have four petals apiece spread into a cross, typical of its brethren in the cabbage family. Nearly every garden in the village has at least a few of these flowers, as it is so easy to share (or steal) the seeds.

On either side of the porch at Hill Top, she coaxes some small bits of cousin Edith’s mossy saxifrage into large masses. She doesn’t know the variety name, but she sketched the plant for Millie Warne when she first began to grow them. Through the spring, their mossy leaves are covered with wiry stems and dainty white flowers. The name saxifrage means “stone breaker,” as its native habitat is in rocky crevices. The namers of plants thought that saxifrages caused the cracks, but really they just like to send their roots down to find pockets of moisture in difficult settings.

Along the slate edging in the Hill Top beds, columbine gathers in clusters, bobbing in the breezes as if exchanging village gossip. Columbine cultivars often hybridize with one another, so it is more than gossip that they are trading. Despite this whiff of impropriety, columbine does set seed though it tends not to “come true.” This has nothing to do with fairy tales, but rather with a tendency for

ornamental traits and colors to revert back to their simple blue-purple ancestor.

Beatrix lets the seed that the columbine drops each year germinate in the concentrated heat of the slates. It always seems like they should be further back in the border, but with long tap roots they are hard to transplant. She likes a loose cottage style and the self-sowers settle in wherever they are happy. It adds an element of surprise to the garden each spring, as the composition changes.



Spring exuberance at Hill Top in Beatrix Potter's day, undated



Columbine and foxglove

The pensive faces of pansies bloom in between them. Some of them are the larger hybrids that she sowed from fresh seed. Others, like the wild pansies, drop seed here and there, popping up all over the garden. The name “pansy,” as Shakespeare put it, “is for thought,” coming from the French word *pensée*, meaning “thought.” She had mice embroider pansies on the cherry-colored corded silk coat in *The Tailor of Gloucester* and surrounded Timmy Willie with them in *The Tale of Johnny Town-Mouse*.



Timmy Willie eats strawberries from *The Tale of Johnny Town-Mouse*

Pansies are related to the common violet that grows in the hedgerows around Sawrey, and that Beatrix planted around the base of the fruit trees in the Hill Top orchard. With the longer days, the strawberries are setting and the apple blossoms are opening. As her experience in the garden grows, Beatrix is able to assess the quality of the fall crop from its spring bloom. She writes one May, “The fruit damson seem set, plums doubtful, apples not out, & not much budding. The daffodils have been most lovely, the garden is very pretty, tulips coming on.”

Spring is that wonderful if somewhat delusional time for a gardener when the sap rises and everything seems possible. The changes to the garden that Beatrix envisioned last year, but ran out of time or energy for, surely can be achieved in the coming months. The weeding is manageable, spring weeds like bittercress and chickweed being easy to pull and, in a pinch, edible.



Violets, watercolor with pencil, undated

Bluebells carpet the May woods around Sawrey and Beatrix describes them “like a bit of sky come down.” Her words verge on the sentimental, but anyone seeing them en masse will bubble with similes. A blue crowd in a city of trees? An inland sea? Perhaps as in *The Fairy Caravan* the bluebells need to jingle for themselves. The bluebell-bedecked wood up the lane behind Castle Cottage makes an appearance in *The Tale of Mr. Tod*, in which Benjamin Bunny notes the difference between their sweet smell and the musky scent emanating from Mr. Tod’s stick house. The scene reappears in *Cecily Parsley’s Nursery Rhymes*. As their name implies, English bluebells are native to this green and pleasant island. They differ from the larger and arguably coarser Spanish bluebell, another species entirely. Like the local red squirrel, the English bluebell is a national treasure. Beatrix Potter would have appreciated the efforts that wildflower enthusiasts around the British Isles are undertaking to preserve them.



Hill Top's border in early spring

Beatrix treasures wildflowers as a part of nature and an extension of her own garden. To a visitor planning a trip in late May, she is encouraging. "It will be a lovely time to see the Lake district. If the bluebells are over, the foxgloves will be in flower—and I will show you the real woods and lanes." Foxglove flowers are tall spires of pink pendulous bells, beloved of bees, adding height and color to a border. The individual blooms look the perfect size for small fingers. The botanist who gave it the scientific name *Digitalis* must have agreed, as "digit" means finger. In old Anglo-Saxon, the name became "foxglove."



Bluebells



Jemima Puddle-duck and the fox among foxgloves

Foxgloves are biennials, growing in the woods and fells around Sawrey, as well as in the borders at Hill Top and Castle Cottage. Their first season they grow into great clusters of fuzzy green basal leaves. The next year they bloom, seeds mature and drop, and the cycle begins again. “I have just been weeding a quantity of seedling foxgloves,” Beatrix writes to Millie, “I think they would make better rooted plants than out of the wood. I shall save some for next spring.”



Wisteria in full bloom at Hill Top



Clematis on Hill Top's façade

The façade of Hill Top is a canvas for climbing plants. A vigorous clematis winds itself around the great canes of the climbing roses and into the downspouts, but spring makes its messy habits worthwhile. The front of the house is festooned with bloom from the foundation to the slate roof. The wisteria soon follows, its craggy trunk shooting out spurs of buds that open into flowers that look like hanging bunches of grapes.

The ancients had it right, thinking that goat-footed Pan, impish god of fertility and spring, could pipe the season in with an instrument of reeds. In the shallows of Esthwaite Water the green reeds are just

pushing up through last year's hollow stems. Frogs wake up. Birds come back. The season ferments like a crock of cowslip wine, fizzing with smells and giddiness. Beatrix proclaims, "Spring is the most beautiful time of the year," though she seems to say that about every season in the Lakes.

SUMMER



“Excuse a scribble I have just come out of the hay—It is uncommonly warm!”

THE PENDULUM SWINGS. The calendar turns. By June, flowers seem in a hurry to open. The gardens at Hill Top and Castle Cottage are buoyant with bloom.

The German iris with their glaucous, dagger-pointed leaves cut through the fluff of lesser plants. Beatrix monitors them for years, waiting for them to bloom. One year her neighbor, Cecily Mills, yanks hers out in disgust, pitching them onto the rubbish heap on top of some old mortar. Wouldn't you know they flowered there? Now both Beatrix and Cecily have marvelous irises in the garden, grown in soil mixed with pulverized mortar rubble. No doubt the plants appreciate the drainage, the lean soil, and the addition of lime from the mortar. Their fleur-de-lys flowers are a joy. The fuzzy beards on their lower petals are like her father's mutton chop sideburns.

The peonies are like her; once settled, they resist moving. They are undemanding plants, blooming without fuss. Energetic ants seem to be doing a country dance on the fat round buds. (Willie is the one for traditional dancing—he practices and enters competitions with friends from the village. Beatrix enjoys the dances too—from the sidelines.) The ants are delirious with collecting the sweet fluid exuded by the plant.



Iris and tulip, pencil and watercolor, undated



A close up of peonies in the Hill Top garden, undated

The insects in Beatrix's garden are endlessly interesting. Sometimes watching them takes all her attention. She invited many into *The Tale of Mrs. Tittlemouse* (1910): beetles and bees, spiders and butterflies. Butterflies and moths remind her of brother Bertram who hunted them like African game as a boy. Sometimes he let her draw their wings at the microscope before he pinned them like trophies with glee in a case. She has hung one of his display boxes in the "New Room" at Hill Top, along with some of his large, somber landscapes. The canvases surround her when she sits inside and works.



Mrs. Tabitha Twitchit disciplines the kittens with peonies and irises in the foreground from *The Tale of Tom Kitten*

The spiders are comfortable at Hill Top both indoors and out. “I rather like spiders too,” Beatrix writes to a young correspondent, “they are useful [for] catching flies.” Unlike Mrs. Tittlemouse, Beatrix underlines, “I won’t have them brushed away in summer, only when we do the spring whitewashing we have to sweep down their webs.” Back in the day when she painted at the microscope, she painted precise biological renderings of furry arachnids.



A spinning spider leaves a web on Hill Top's fence

The insect life in the garden is attracted by smell as well as sight, and summer is the season of the nose. The herbs are at their best. Great bushes of sage bloom on their square stems. Flavor accrues in their silvery leaves over the long days. Mrs. Beeton called sage a “sweet herb,” along with thyme, mint, marjoram, savory, and basil. You might roast a duck with them, but they also add flavor to the soups and stews and savory pies.



Moths, watercolor with pen and ink, undated



Lavender, watercolor with pencil, undated

Rosemary blooms. It seems a miracle that this Mediterranean native is so at home in the soggy north. Perhaps it is sort of a reverse vacation, with so many British heading to points south for the winter. The Sawrey soil conditions are just right, quickly drying out after each

rain.

Shakespeare wrote, "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance." In her twenties Beatrix could recite so many of Shakespeare's plays by heart. She remains a person of solitary pursuits: painting, reading, writing, gardening. Close up, the rosemary has tiny purple-blue flowers that look like orchids, needles green with a stripe of gray—contrast and complement for an artist to appreciate, lovely in design and even lovelier to smell. Brushing a hand against a branch releases the fragrance. Sharp. A cue, or perhaps a memento.

The bushes of gray lavender give her a glow of nearly maternal accomplishment. She rooted the plants from cuttings over the years, small pieces of stem stuck into a sandy mix. Every time a cutting takes root, it seems like a miracle. From the Latin lessons in the Bolton Gardens schoolroom she knows that *lavare* means "to wash." Lavender does make the linens fresh. The bees like it too.

She is pleased with her pinks, small carnations with their zigzag edges and gray-green stems. They are perfect for her cottage garden, antique flowers beloved of the English since the sixteenth century. In fact, the color pink was named for the flower, not the other way round. The word "pink" originally meant to pierce or perforate, in the same way that pinking shears cut a decorative edge on fabric. She remembers a great bed of pinks growing at Fawe Park and drawing them there with thoughts of Benjamin Bunny. Their gray leaves form a tight mat at the edge of the stone path at Hill Top.

The sweet william, cousin to the pinks, are from her cousin Edith's garden at Windermere. The best thing about sharing plants is that they always bring the giver to mind.

Unlike spring when each flower can be appreciated on its own, in summer the garden is crowded with flowers. "The garden here is very gay," Beatrix beams, "white bell flowers everywhere amongst the weeds, and the house covered with roses. The pinks are very full."

More shrubs bloom. The spiraea flowers look like little posies. Currants and gooseberries have tiny inflorescence that soon progress into round fruit. Privet buds open in the hedges around Castle Cottage, luring the bees. The honeybees fill tiny holders on the backs of their legs with pollen, like the pannier baskets that the donkeys and horses used as far back as the Middle Ages to cart wool over the humped-back stone bridges around the Lakes.



Carnations, watercolor with pen and ink, about 1904



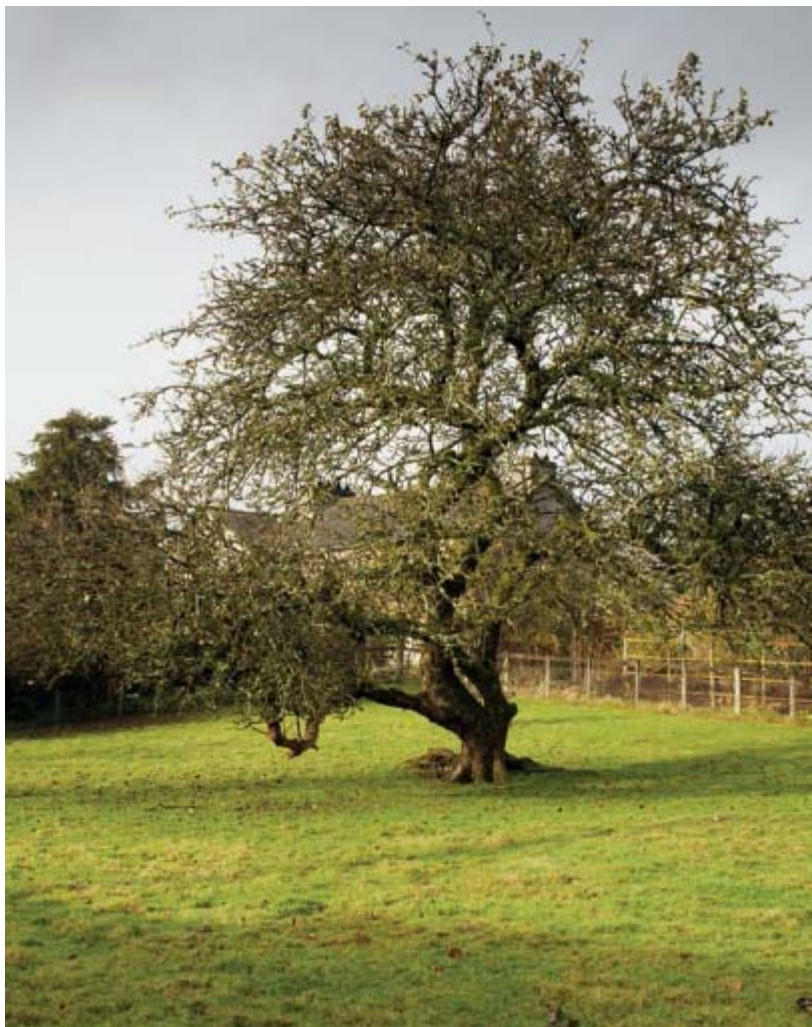
Summer border at Hill Top

Houseleeks have settled into the sills and slate of the house at Hill Top. They aren't leeks at all, but one of the handful of succulents native to the British Isles. Looking up houseleek in the index of her gilt-edged Sowerby's *British Wild Flowers*, Beatrix could find it listed as genus *Sempervivum*, literally "always alive," and species *tectorum*, meaning "of roofs and houses." Its little rosette of leaves is spongy, and a flower stalk pops up in July with pink flowers. In past times, it was thought to protect the house from lightning; today it has been rediscovered as a plant for twenty-first-century green roofs. The old becomes new again.



Hill Top's summer garden, undated

Some years there can be too much of a good thing. If the blooms on the apple trees were heavy in spring, the developing fruit will need to be thinned on the spurs. “And what a crop of apples!” Beatrix exclaims one summer. “I am thinning ours with a pair of scissors, so high as I can reach.” Otherwise the apples will be stunted, their energy dissipated over so many fruits.



Apple tree at Hill Top

The first rose opens before the end of June, beginning a show of color and fragrance that arcs across the high days of summer. They must be pruned and tied, fed and deadheaded. If untended, they start to look like ragamuffins. Roses by any other name would still be an effort, but she wouldn't be without them. As she notes there is "nothing more sweet than the old pink cabbage rose that peeps in at the small paned windows." Some modern rosarians describe cabbage roses as "dumpy." Beatrix, happily describing her own physique as "stout and active," embraces their chubby blooms.



Bud and bloom at Hill Top

With the roses at the windows, Beatrix coordinates the front rooms at Hill Top with the garden, connecting indoors and out. She chooses colors to blend, floral paper for the front hall and kitchen, green paint for the stairway. Upstairs the sitting room is a peach tone, and the many landscapes on the walls echo her landscape out the window. The bedroom is the prize, with its glorious William Morris wallpaper, its bold Daisy pattern above the chair rail. In the Treasure Room at Hill Top, her own cabinet of curiosities, she hangs two original botanicals, one of a rose and another of a primrose, by the artist Valentine Bartholomew.



Hill Top with roses

At Castle Cottage the moss roses she planted are in bloom. The flower stalks and buds are covered with little hairs that look like moss, or a hedgehog. The flowers are fragrant, as are many of the flowers in Beatrix's garden. She surrounds herself with color and perfume, a luxury for the senses.

What Beatrix calls syringa, and we call mock orange, is another olfactory delight. The scent is so sweet it turns her visitors' heads, a visceral response. Is there a word for that? With eyes it would be called staring, but they are using their noses. The white flowers are unassuming, and its growth habit is unkempt. Only the fragrance maintains its place in her pantheon.



From the front door at Hill Top, undated

St. John's wort is knocking on the door at Hill Top. Beatrix notes that it, "pushes up between the flags in the porch, it has peeped up between the skirting and the flags inside the porch place." At Hill Top, St. John's wort blooms in time for its eponymous saint's day, June 24. ("Wort" is the Old English word for plant.) Really it is most satisfactory, blooming bright and yellow for months and growing to the size of a shrub without much encouragement at all. When she looks at the leaves with the sun shining through them, she sees small round dots like little windows. Small wonder that from ancient Britain forward, the plant has been celebrated for its power to drive away witches and depression. Since Beatrix's time, chemists have endorsed its depression-alleviating ability. The jury is still out about the witches.

The lilies are a spectacle with their great trumpeting flowers. From her first year in her garden, she declares to Millie Warne, "I shall plant the lilies between the azaleas." She puts them in "most carefully, in a mixture of sand, old mortar & peat. I ought to do well with lilies, having a supply of black peat soil." It almost seems a shame to plant

them, the bulbs so big and beautiful with imbricated scales. But above ground, their flowers open against the wall each year, proclaiming summer.

The white bellflowers are a favorite. They spread around the garden, dropping seed with some abandon. They seem like the summer equivalent of snowdrops, green and white and popping up wherever they like.

Beatrix's spring seed planting pays profits in summer. The sweet peas have sent their tendrils spiraling up tripod poles, making wigwam houses for fairies who are so inclined. She cuts the pastel flowers and makes arrangements for the house and bouquets to share—the more she cuts, the more they bloom. Poppies unfurl from their buds like butterflies from cocoons. Mignonette and stocks add perfume and petals. Zinnias and hollyhocks bloom in a festival of color all the way until frost. She reminds herself to collect seeds when they are ripe.



Tiger lily, watercolor with sepia ink, about 1900



White bellflowers



A poppy in bud

The lanes are frothy with meadowsweet. In the spacious days of summer, Beatrix enjoys a stroll. The wildflowers and birds, the animals both wild and domestic, are part of her home, her domestic ecology. Late in the season she starts spotting her old favorites, the funguses, around the pastures and woods. While she is done painting botanicals, she has inserted a few of them into her books over the years: gilled mushrooms stand by Squirrel Nutkin's tree stump, a shelf fungus acts as Timmy Willie's table, toadstools are a plot device in *The Fairy Caravan*. Walking around Sawrey is an indulgence, when she can tear herself away from the clamoring demands of plants and animals domestic.



Fungus in a Sawrey pasture



Squirrel Nutkin playing marbles on a mushroom-encrusted stump

Warm sunny stretches of weather call for rowing. There were years when Beatrix would row on Esthwaite while Bertram or her father fished—not that she didn’t occasionally throw in a line herself. Now Moss Eccles Tarn is the usual destination. She glances over fondly at Willie as he casts into the tarn from their flat-bottomed rowboat. The red and white water lilies that she and their niece Nancy planted in the tarn have established nicely.

Beatrix monitors the progress of a few alpine rhododendrons that she put in up by the tarns, as if in exchange for the wildflowers that she digs up and replants in her valley garden. She puts up wire netting to provide protection from wandering sheep. Some Cornish heath, out of place in the Lakes, starts growing near them, and she posts a sample to Louie Choyce to confirm the identification. It probably hitchhiked along with the rhododendrons in their nursery pots, as heath was sometimes used for packing roots. The name “heath,” referring to both the plant and the barren places where it is at home, is from the Anglo-Saxon *haeth*, a wasteland. The word “heathen” comes from the same root.



Moss Eccles Tarn



Water lilies, watercolor with pen and ink, 1906

Summer visitors descend like a heathen horde, outnumbering sheep in the Lake District. Beatrix notes traffic issues, writing to Louie in 1922: "I wonder what the roads will be like in a few years, the motor traffic last summer between Windermere & Ambleside was 120 per cent increased from the summer before." Yet she does appreciate the automobile. When Marian Perry arrives from afar, a drive in the country complete with a picnic makes it a red-letter day.

Visitors, both expected and unexpected, often find her in the hayfields. Summer is time to make hay. Her letters link hay and weather, weather and hay. "Four days of it were hot," she reports, "and we got in two fields of hay and the ley [lea] corn without a drop of rain ... We were a fortnight in the post office meadow; except during the dry week we have had to cut little bits, and work it over & over." The grasses and grains must be cut and dried, then stored. If it rains during the process the hay must be raked over to dry. Enough rain and the hay rots and is ruined. Hay is fodder. It feeds the cows and horses over the winter. (Not the Herdwick sheep—they prefer their own lean mountain pastures.) If her hay crop is short, some cows will have to be sold. Beatrix is a practical farmer, and she expects the farm to make a profit, however small.



Beatrix and Marian Perry picnicking in 1930. Of the photograph, taken by Perry's niece Betty Harris, Beatrix wrote: "Your long-suffering aunty looks rather like an elderly sheep. But I am more like a good tempered witch than a cow."



Sheaves in a Sawrey field, watercolor with pencil, undated

Phlox is the stalwart of Beatrix's late summer garden, blooming until August. Tall and fragrant, the phlox must be staked to prevent the big round flower heads from pulling the plants down in heavy rain. Beatrix supports her plants with small branches left over from pruning the shrubs and fruit trees. The natural color quickly blends in with the green leaves in the garden.

The yellow loosestrife is blooming. Her Gerard's *Herball* notes that tying flowers to the bridles of a team of oxen or plough horses would make them more congenial, lose their strife in short. She likes them for their upright golden touch in her summer garden beds. Though she must say that the loosestrife seems to be settling in somewhat too happily in her garden, growing like Topsy from underground runners.



Phlox



Yellow loosestrife

Beatrix has help in the garden. Or does she? Unlike her mother who has an experienced gardener at Lindeth Howe, Beatrix makes do with young men from the village unless Louie Choyce is in residence. In a letter to Miss Choyce, Beatrix writes that her latest helper was hopeless. “He has not the recognizing to take up docks & dandelions

but he has scraped the ‘weathering’ & moss off the outdoor stairs including a little saxifrage which I valued; no sense and does not listen either.” She wants the garden and house to merge. The sweet greenery that planted itself on the steps was a cherished part of the effect.

Summer is the battleground for weeds. In spring they are small and inconsequential, easy to pull, easier to ignore. Turn your back until summer, and the garden becomes, as Beatrix puts it, “an overgrown tangle” or “an outfacing mess.” Annuals weeds like groundsel, and perennials like dandelion and dock, can turn the garden into a reproach. Yet Beatrix can excuse the garden everything for the pleasures it brings.



Summer in the Hill Top garden

By the end of August the damson plums are starting to come in, ripening into a taste of the antique and exotic. Roman history interests her, and it was the Romans who introduced the “plum of Damascus,” or damson, to England. Plums in general appreciate high moisture, so the Lake District weather suits them perfectly. They are stone fruit, so-called because of their round pits. After she pits them, Beatrix adds plenty of sugar to her damson preserves. They are high in acid and too tart to be eaten straight off the tree. Just as well, or the neighborhood children would be into them.

The apples and pears are coming on strong. Many years the crop coincides with the arrival of the Boy Scouts. She graciously agrees to host their campsite on her farm, but often finds them in her apple

trees. Even after negotiations with their troop leader, and a truce that includes access to some of the *smaller* apples, she still discovers “specimens of scouts, distended with green fruit inside clothes.” She sends them off with instructions to cook the fruit, while they chant, “Three cheers for the *old* lady!” So much for feeling young.



The summer border in Beatrix Potter's day, undated



Gooseberries

With the sun high and the days long, thoughts of winter are banished—almost. They creep in when the potatoes are ready to be dug and stored in the cellar. When the vegetable marrows proliferate or get too big, she makes vegetable marrow jam. There is fruit to be preserved. From the orchard come crabapples, damsons, and plums. From the garden: strawberries and raspberries, gooseberries and currants. From the countryside: elderberries, rowanberries, and blackberries. She remembers a neighbor at Wray, coaching her that the blackberry “is a kindly berry, it ripens in the rain.” The season of fruit is short and the winters are long. Every jar of jam or jelly will be a taste of summer in the dark days. But no use rushing things. There is still autumn to enjoy.



Blackberries

AUTUMN



“Perfect autumn days—still, sunshiny mists ... golden haze.”

BEATRIX THE WEATHER-WATCHER observes autumn edge into the garden. The light changes, slicing with an angled brightness. When the sun makes it through the clouds, that is. Sometimes the climate seems inhospitable to humans, let alone plants. The skies are slate, and it seems to rain every day. Surely it will break soon. “The weather is rather rough & unsettled,” she reports in a letter. “It is a little colder today, if it comes frosty it will probably be finer.” She must remember to rescue the potted geraniums, bringing them indoors. Frost clears the skies, welcoming sharp clear days and nights when the Milky Way is so bright it looks like its own long, endless lake.

The leaves spark, then flame. Oaks turn to russet, beeches to copper, birches to gold. The larch needles yellow. During the war, the second war, she has to take down some of the great plantations of larch around her properties. They are needed as pit props for the mines, a part of the war effort. But she thinks ahead, going around with pockets full of future oaks, dibbling in acorns for the next generation. At Troutbeck, she plants five acres of larch saplings thinking forward to when the fence posts around the great park will need replacing. “An estate should always have a stock of larch coming on, no matter what sentimentalists may say against the tree,” she writes to her liaison at the National Trust. “I should like to plant Scotch firs on Hall’s Hill, before the house, and some oaks on the south slope of the Tongue & the Colt Park, but it is useless to plant specimen trees or groups without heavy fencing” (because of the sheep). Beatrix remembers Capability Brown’s tree-scaping at Camfield Place, and she now has a broad enough canvas to create an estate-sized composition of her own. “It would be both ornamental & good shelter for stock,” she adds, ever practical.



Pink thistles, watercolor with pencil, undated



Mist over Esthwaite Water



Beech tree beginning to color, watercolor with pen and ink, undated

Nature makes its own composition above Castle Cottage. Up toward the tarns the long grasses turn shades of brown. A few wildflowers still bloom among the tussocks and little bogs—tiny harebells, red hawkweed, white yarrow. Leaves fall. The thistles go to seed, with soft

down floating in the air like fairies. Light frost burnishes the bracken in great swathes. It tarnishes gently, like polished copper turning brown.

The bracken is ready to be gathered for the farm, and Beatrix walks up after dinner to help with the raking. She enjoys the climb. Sheep dot the lean meadows that rise above Sawrey. Their fuzzy coats have grown back since their June shearing, ready for the cold. Busy with grazing, they barely note her progress up the hill. She spots the Cannon children already at work among the bracken, loading the cart for their father. "I think it is the pleasantest 'harvest'," Beatrix writes to Millie, "It is not so hot as the haymaking, but it is a funny place to take a cart, we always expect the wheels will be coming off, it is such an awful road up & down." While in the garden it would be a weed, to Beatrix the farmer, bracken is a marvel of economy. In exchange for labor and modest transportation, it provides free bedding for her stabled livestock all winter.



Castle Cottage in autumn



Forest scene with bracken, watercolor with pencil, about 1894

The stubble in the fields reads like a code for the end of her farmer's year, but now that the harvest is in, there is time for the agricultural fairs. Beatrix is busy with them, their commerce and their competition. She dons her best woolen suit and, driven by her chauffeur, Mr. Stevens, enjoys the autumn colors en route. At the fair, she socializes with friends and farmers, honest country folk she has learned to love. Her surplus sheep are sold, with "Mistress Heelis" carefully monitoring the prices. While she does not depend on farming for her daily bread, she wants her agricultural efforts to make economic sense. Sometimes she is in the market for a new ram, called a "tup" by Beatrix and her sheep farmers, to add to the bloodlines, being a "believer in 'breed'." She is proud of her "little Baa's" that take ribbons in the judging.



Trees and hills, Sawrey



Creepers with their seasonal blush

Home from the fair, she walks through her garden. Creepers on the walls are coloring. Michaelmas daisies bloom like a galaxy of stars, backlit in the luminous afternoon. Beatrix's New England friends call them asters. This North American wildflower was rechristened in England for the saint's day of Michael the Archangel and his cohort, September 29. In Old England, Michaelmas was a "quarter day,"

signaling the beginning of one-fourth of the year. Rents were due.
Help was hired. Now the saint and his flower connote autumn.



Japanese anemones in bud



Hill Top's roses with their last hurrah

Japanese anemones flower, as they do on Norman's grave. They are tall and sturdy; over the years they have made great clumps. Beatrix remembers the day that the hamper of plant donations arrived from cousin Edith's garden in Windermere. It was 1906, her first anniversary at Hill Top. She had marveled at the anemones' coarse roots, gnarled underpinnings for a graceful plant. Growing in her garden its six-petaled flowers are akin to the little white wood anemones that pop up wild in spring, but these bloom pink on long wiry stems, stretching over the back of the border. She likes them almost as much when they are finished flowering, the round seedheads pirouetting in the wind.



Autumn view of Hill Top, watercolor and pencil, undated

The roses carry on, with intermittent, almost defiant blooms. Of all the flowers and plants in Beatrix's art and authorship, roses make the most frequent appearance. She loves them in her garden at any season, but at the bookends—the first of summer and the last of the year—they tug at her heart. The rose hips redden. They blush the way she did as a child, when her father's friends teased her.

The dahlias are footprints of summer, still glorious with flowers. Their round buds form and open, form and open. The more Beatrix cuts them for bouquets, the more they seem to bloom. Then one morning around the middle of October a heavy frost—the locals call it a white frost—leaves them black. She wishes hers were more protected. Her neighbor Cecily's dahlias outlast hers. Gardening is undeniably a competitive sport, but it won't be many nights until Cecily's are down too. Is the twinge of satisfaction a sin? Ah well, if so, it is certainly venial.

Once the frost has killed the dahlia foliage to the ground, Beatrix sets to lifting the swollen dahlia tubers out of the ground. They can be stored in the root cellar for next year's garden. It is always a wonder to see how they've multiplied underground. Next year she'll have to give some of them away. Perhaps she can post a few to Louie.

Speaking of post, next spring's new bulbs have arrived. The tulips with their smooth brown tunics look good enough to eat. It is too easy to succumb to the temptation to order a few more varieties of daffodils. Then the bulbs arrive and want to go in, always a logistical puzzle while the garden is still growing. As long as she can keep the bulbs cool and dry, she can put off planting them. Sometimes waiting for frost to set the garden back is easier—where the dahlias come out, the new bulbs can go in. Beatrix would rather have them all planted by the middle of October to let them settle in before the ground freezes solid, but often she simply has too much to do.

The chrysanthemums are the last flowers to bloom in her garden. The last seems sometimes dearest. Beatrix has many associations with this plant, and over the years, she has woven associations—with people, with places—into the fabric of her garden. Her maternal

grandparents grew chrysanthemums, many different varieties; her uncle Crompton Potter won ribbons for his in the Manchester flower shows. She remembers her teenaged self, sitting on the train with Uncle Henry Roscoe, carrying "a bunch of chrysanthemums as large as cauliflowers." They were coming back to London from Woodcote, his country home in Surrey, where he and Aunt Lucy took great pleasure in their garden. She now understands that pleasure completely.

Chrysanthemums aside, the rest of her garden is looking slightly forlorn. It takes some cajoling to cling to any vestige of prettiness, but to her the garden is beautiful in any state. Perhaps, though, it is time for a big dig.



Dahlia, watercolor with pen and ink, about 1903

A garden always gives another chance, an opportunity for a makeover. It is a permanent impermanence. If a plant pouts she can relocate it. When a bed is overgrown, she can dig it up and replant it. Beatrix reports to Louie, "I got most of Hill Top dug with assistance, it was in a great mess." She gets rid of the clutter, dividing the phlox and sorting out the campanula seedlings that come up willy-nilly. She beats back the yellow loosestrife that should have come with a warning label. Every gardener has fantasies of jettisoning everything and starting over, but she is too practical-minded for that.

The plants appear appreciative of a fresh start. Odd, but the perennials seem to get stuck when they have been in the same place for too long. “It is anxious work to dig up a border,” notes Beatrix, “but ... it has done good to most of the plants; they get ‘set’, as we say in Lancashire about a pig or calf that has stuck in its growing. I think the plants do well in nursery gardens because they are lifted frequently, & start afresh.” She lifts the plants and digs over the soil with her garden fork. This is her opportunity to rearrange. She can play with the composition, imagining the progression of flowers and hues, working with the scale and texture of the leaves. Even if she feels like her aging eyes aren’t up to doing color work with her paints any more, she can still play with color in the garden.



Hill Top's garden in autumn

Many of her perennials enjoy being divided, split into pieces. They seem to tell her when the time is right. The centers of the plants hollow out, with growth coming up in a donut shape around an empty middle. Once divided, they will reward Beatrix's work with a better show in years to come. It seems a shame to waste the leftovers, so she tries to place them in good homes. “I think I will post you a Japanese cowslip,” she proposes to Millie Warne. “I don't know if they would grow in London, they like a damp corner.” Beatrix likes her damp corner of the world too.



Japanese cowslips in Beatrix Potter's garden, eventually dug and divided

Other plants arrive by post from her network of gardening friends with similar surplus. One of them, Charlie Cooper, sends her a bit of his garden in Devon one September. She sends him a thank you along with a dash of soil science. "What a lovely present of irises—(and what curious red earth? I had nearly forgotten the Devonshire red). The soil is curiously different here; but I do not doubt that these liberal roots will *grow*—in fact I rather doubt if cow manure is necessary in this wet climate and loose soil; usually our plants grow *too freely*."



Seedheads of honesty

Beatrix promises him the roots of tway-blade, a little local orchid, in return. In her day, there was no feeling of trespass when digging up wild plants. The supply seemed endless. She goes out with her trowel to the edge of the woods where she knows they grow. Charlie would see how the tway-blades like his red Devon soil.

She is busy gathering closer to home as well as in the woods. Seed collecting is a gardener's act of optimism, not to mention frugality. Seeds are tiny bundles of next year's garden, there for the asking. They are magic, like the fern seeds that cloaked *The Fairy Caravan* with invisibility. (She knew that ferns, like funguses, have spores. For her little readers, perhaps she felt that the word "seed" sounded better, in spite of the bad natural history.) She is a seed saver, though she sometimes tries to do too many things at once. "I wrote your address on an envelope that I was collecting flower seeds in," she confesses, "then I put it away with the other seed packets here—and I could not remember." Seeds from the vegetable garden are targets too. "Carrots, onion, leeks are useful We have lots of the cabbage tribe which ripen seeds in profusion." She spreads her seeds out in the parlor on old sheets of paper by the front windows to dry before

storing them. Her stash grows from year to year. One of these days she will need to sort them out.



One of the cabbage tribe



The warm wall in the kitchen garden at Hill Top

The flowering perennials in her garden are drawing in for winter. When she has the time, she cuts back most of them to the ground, leaving a few of the stalks with interesting seedheads standing. The goatsbeard gets covered with white hoar frost, looking more like an old man's beard than a goat's. The honesty drops its sheath and could easily be paper money. What seeds the birds don't eat will provide some punctuation for the beds in winter. She worries about the birds, this lifelong animal lover. As the year recedes, Beatrix feeds them in the garden, attracting fluttering crowds. They enliven the landscape, a hungry host, and provide entertainment for the price of some seeds, much as the Fairy Caravan did for its audience.



Apples, photographed by Beatrix or her father, about 1907

In the vegetable garden she considers cutting a few last stalks of rhubarb, but she abstains, leaving the plants to gain strength for next spring. The fruit trees trained on the hot brick wall are losing their leaves. Some of the late vegetables seem to perk up with the cold. The cabbages are great globes with ruffs like Elizabeth Tudor. Beatrix looks with pleasure on her best row of celery ever. They are banked

up with soil to blanch the bases, making them sweet and tender. Lettuce makes a comeback, opening in frilly rows. A light frost doesn't faze lettuce, but she needs to pick it before a hoar frost freezes the watery leaves.



Apple picking, from *Peter Rabbit's Almanac for 1929*



Autumn berries including hawthorn, watercolor with pen and ink, about 1905

The late apples are yet to be picked in the orchard. Perhaps this year she will dry some apple rings. She walks out into the tall orchard grass, but avoids the nettles, still sporadically blooming with their well-known sting. Her collection of wildflowers planted in the orchard has recovered from her nieces' misguided efforts to "weed." She was angry, really angry, when she spotted the girls pulling out her carefully placed transplants, even though they were trying to be helpful.

The blackberries on the edge of the meadows are still bearing. The fruit of the hawthorn are bright red in the hedgerows. It is appropriate that the hawthorns are growing there. Hawthorns are named not for their fruit, but for the Old Saxon word for hedge. They must have seemed the perfect plant to that tunic-clad Saxon yeoman. His hawthorn plants grew, vigorous and thorny, into a fence that even sheep couldn't penetrate.

The hollies around the property are heavy with berries. Some years Beatrix sells small conifers from the farm to Christmas tree dealers. She wonders if she should sell the holly branches for decorations too. It is a quandary. If sold, "the dealers are so greedy they cut back the poor holly trees to bare poles" if not the branches are stolen, ripped off the trees in gaping tears. She wishes they could be saved in place. "The trees are lovely in secluded places where they have been left alone, glowing red and shining green." She can save only so much of

the countryside.

When the cold sets in, she swaddles the outdoor pumps with sacking. Daylight diminishes. Beatrix and her garden are left on the doorstep of winter. The trees are bare, but she can already see snowdrops peeking through the soil.

PART THREE

Visiting Beatrix Potter's Gardens





Beatrix Potter's world: England, Scotland, and Wales

YOU WON'T COME UPON Beatrix Potter's gardens by accident. You will have to seek them out. A Beatrix Potter gardening pilgrimage might start in London. Her South Kensington neighborhood, fallen into seediness after World War II, has revived. Though many of the terrace homes have been divided into pricey flats and their mews turned into luxury residences, there remains a sense of Potter's place from the tree-lined streets and sedate architecture. Damaged in the Blitz, No. 2 Bolton Gardens was demolished, though many of its neighbors still stand. Fittingly, a primary school was built in its place so that the site of Beatrix Potter's London home is alive with children. If you walk in front of the school, you will find a commemorative wall plaque, complete with a few of her favorite characters.

Turn around, and you will see the garden she saw. Still proprietary behind its iron fence and locked gate, the Bolton Gardens square is busy with playing toddlers and watchful caregivers, those in love and those at leisure, strolling and sitting among the plantings. Residents continue to pay a garden levy to enjoy the privilege, just as the Potters did.

From there it is an easy walk past the South Kensington Underground station, very much in operation by Beatrix Potter's day, then alongside the home and studio of Sir John Millais on Cromwell Place to the former location of the Horticultural Gardens. If you walk on Imperial College Road or Prince Consort Road you will be ambling over the gardens where Beatrix and Bertram once played. The roads and the buildings of the Science Museum and Imperial College swallowed up the available land over the years, starting in 1888 when the gardens closed. The Chelsea Flower Show started here. To be more precise, the Great Spring Show of the Royal Horticultural Society was held here from 1862 to 1888 until it moved first to Temple Gardens and then, in 1912, to its present home on the grounds of the Royal Hospital.



Bolton Gardens now



Bolton Gardens then, photographed by Rupert Potter, about 1896

Beatrix would easily recognize Kensington Gardens. The Broad Walk is still anchored by Round Pond. The Flower Walk blooms, and birds sing in the shade trees. The palace where Victoria lived as a child is easily visible again, thanks to a recent project undertaken by the Royal Parks. Dozens of trees were removed to open up the view for Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee, part of a 2012 redesign of the gardens by Todd Longstaffe-Gowan. It is still full of children and "children-who-never-grow-up," as Beatrix once called herself, an allusion to another children's hero, Peter Pan, who resided in Kensington Gardens in a J. M. Barrie book.

And what of the two country houses that left the largest imprint on young Beatrix Potter's gardening biography? Camfield Place in Hertfordshire, the place she loved best in the world, is still intact as an estate and private residence, most recently the home of the late romance novelist, Barbara Cartland. While Camfield itself is not open to visitors, you can visit the extensive gardens of Hatfield House nearby, just as Beatrix Potter did. The estate includes the palace where the young Elizabeth Tudor lived. Beatrix wrote to Louie Warne, one of Norman's nieces, in 1907, "I was showing my cousin an old oak tree at Hatfield where Princess Elizabeth was sitting when they came to tell her that Queen Mary was dead and she was Queen Elizabeth [I]. She wore a ruff and had a big nose; she could not sit under the tree today

because there is nothing left except the trunk with no branches!” Queen Elizabeth II planted a new oak in the original location in 1985, marked by a plaque that does not mention the nose.

In Scotland, Dalguise House still stands, but is converted into a lodge and activity center for school trips and holidays. Children and adults take nature walks, discovering, one hopes, the same wonder that Beatrix and Bertram did in the woodlands that surround the house. Unlike the Potter children, today’s guests at Dalguise can also take advantage of organized adventures that include trapeze and zip wire. The gardens that remain are minimal, but the landscape resonates.



The Tudor garden at Hatfield House

Around the nearby villages of Dunkeld and Birnam are well-marked trails along the broad meanders of the River Tay. Groves of mature trees include some the largest in the United Kingdom. Eighteenth-century follies, the Hermitage and Ossian’s Cave, invite imagination. These forests are a likely habitat to spot red squirrels like Nutkin. Gray squirrels à la Timmy Tiptoes were introduced to nineteenth-century Britain—the acquisitiveness for exotics extended beyond plants to the animal kingdom. The grays have outcompeted the reds in most areas further south in England, including the Lake District.



National Trust signpost to Hill Top Farm with Castle Cottage in the background

Birnam, which shares a train station with Dunkeld, boasts the Birnam Arts and Conference Centre. A unicorn-topped pillar, which stood in the Dalguise garden in the Potters' day, is installed there along with a permanent exhibit celebrating Beatrix Potter in Scotland. Outdoors, bronze statues of many of her most famous characters frolic in the Beatrix Potter Garden. When it was opened in 1992, the designers wrote, "Wild flowers, water plants, mosses and fungi will not be discouraged, nor will wildlife (of the more congenial sort)."

Thirteen miles south, you can take in the Perth Museum and Art Gallery. It houses a choice collection of Potter's fungus paintings along with the story of the mycological friendship that developed between Charlie McIntosh, the Perthshire postman-naturalist, and a young artist-scientist named Beatrix Potter.



Near Sawrey

The largest concentration of Beatrix Potter's gardens is folded into a corner of Cumbria. Most of them are dotted around Windermere. The major draw, Hill Top Farm, sits in an area that locals called the "back o' t' lake." It still feels remote. You can approach it from the Bowness ferry, at least in summer, and hike the two miles up the long hill through Far Sawrey, or wait for the next 525 bus. With a car you might take the B-road from Hawkshead, curving around Esthwaite Water following the signposts for Sawrey. When the road takes a sharp zag through the village look quickly, or you may miss Hill Top Farm.



The magic of Hill Top Farm

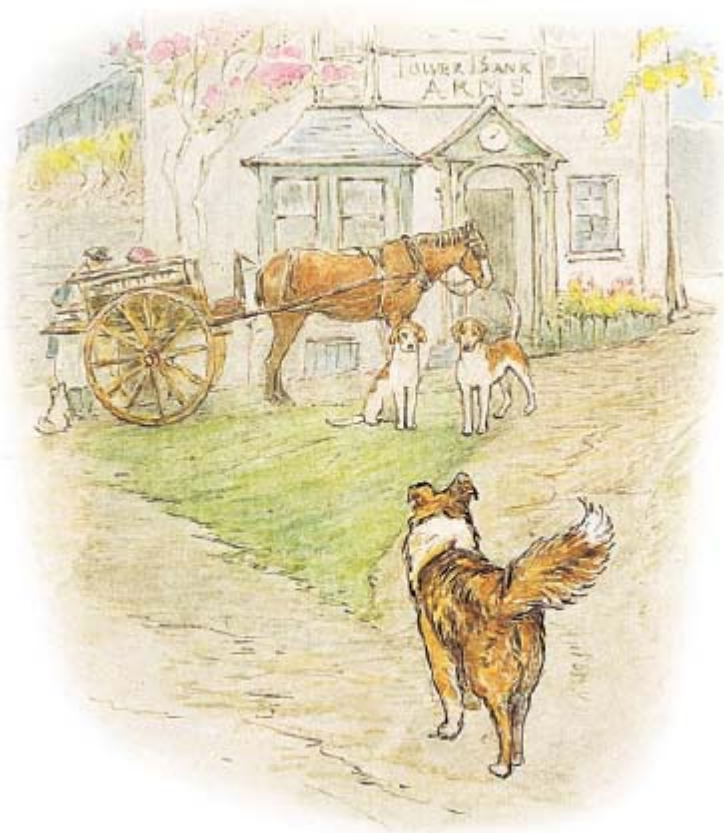


Tower Bank Arms today

A National Trust parking lot is tucked unobtrusively off the road. Sadly, you are parking atop Beatrix's orchard across from the Castle, so you will have to summon up a vision of her fruit trees—apple and pear, damson and plum—and the meanders of spring bulbs and

summer wildflowers that bloomed beneath them. Did she envision the number of visitors she would attract to her village in summer, like swarms of bees?

On the short walk from the parking lot to Hill Top, take time to explore the narrow lanes and enjoy the houses with their slate porches and little flowery gardens, much as Beatrix did in 1896 when she first stayed with her family in Sawrey. You will pass Buckle Yeat Cottage, painted in lush detail for *The Tale of the Pie and the Patty-Pan*. It still sports a colorful, flowery front garden. The farmhouse where Beatrix lodged during Hill Top's renovations, Belle Green, remains a private residence. If you peer over the wall, you can spy a back garden that would have made Mrs. Satterthwaite proud. The village shop and smithy are long gone, though the buildings remain. These days the business of the village is mostly seasonal, the customers mostly tourist.



Tower Bank Arms in Potter's illustration

The seventeenth-century Tower Bank Arms is still bedecked with

roses in summer, as it was in *The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck*. This is a friendly inn, where dogs, children, and wellies are welcome. On chilly days, patrons enjoy their drinks and meals in front of the old-fashioned fireplace. Spend the night if time permits. The four upstairs guest rooms are numbered in the old dialect that Beatrix learned from her shepherds—Yan, Tan, Tethera, and Methera—and used in *The Fairy Caravan*. Night in the village is dark and, after the bar closes, completely quiet. You may wake in the morning to the lowing or baaing of Hill Top’s livestock. The views from the deep-set upstairs windows make Beatrix’s love affair with Sawrey perfectly understandable.



A still life of garden tools at Hill Top

Next door to Tower Bank Arms and sharing a wall is Hill Top Farm, the magnet for Beatrix Potter’s fans, garden and otherwise. One no longer enters the garden through the Tom Kitten gate; it was closed when crowds got too large. A new gate at the far corner of the property channels visitors into the garden. The garden is laid out along her stone path much as she would have known it. It is cozy and welcoming: fruits and vegetables amid the flowers, loose sweeps of

plants that are kept in a carefully careless style. Roses and clematis bloom. The walled vegetable garden has peas and potatoes, radishes and rhubarb. A wooden beehive, much like the one that Mr. Satterthwaite made, sits in the bee bole, a purpose-built shelf in the stone wall. An arrangement of tools—a watering pot, spade, and soil sieve—is set in homage to Mr. McGregor's garden.



A descendent in the Hill Top garden



Castle Cottage seen over the Hill Top garden gate

In season, Hill Top Farm is beset by sightseers—you need a timed ticket to tour the house—but the garden can be seen at any time during opening hours. Come early or stay late to see it in morning or evening light, and to catch a glimpse of the garden alone. Next to the garden a few apple trees are cordoned off into a small paddock. You will often see a rabbit or two moving lippity-lippity through the grass.

The National Trust has made some necessary concessions in the garden for the volume of visitors. The area in front of the house has been paved to withstand the shuffle of feet waiting for the next tour. A bench under the parlor windows is there to sit on, though Beatrix rarely took time to rest during the growing season. A second paved path has been added behind the long trellis to direct the stream of visitors downhill to the inevitable gift shop and exit.

As you look at the garden and its swath of flowers, realize that few of the actual plants that Beatrix tended are still growing in the garden. The trick to preservation gardening is to keep the garden looking more or less as it did in her day while dealing with the inexorable fact that plants grow, spread, and sooner or later die. The Hill Top garden has been dug and replanted several times in the scores of years since Beatrix last gardened there. Peter Tasker, the National Trust's gardener at Hill Top Farm, selects plants to mimic those that appear in period photographs, in her correspondence, and in her *Tales*. You may spot the occasional weed or shaggy shrub. The mild untidiness is a deliberate nod to the cottage garden style and Beatrix Potter's gardening habits. She never aimed for a show garden.

As you step from the garden into the house, turn around and look out the door for a Beatrix Potter-eye view. The deep doorway and front windows framed the garden for her. Flowers entered, rather than tourists. Inside the color green dominates, bringing the outside in. The floral touches—wallpaper, fabrics, botanical art—speak to the garden on the other side of the walls. Landscape paintings merge nature with home.

As you set out through the gate at Hill Top, look across Post Office Meadow. Beyond it you can see a modest pale house, angled to the road. Its picture window looks towards Hill Top. It hardly looks a castle, but it was for Mr. and Mrs. William Heelis. If you walk up the lane next to the meadow, you can look over the gate into the Castle Cottage garden. It has changed greatly since they gardened there.

That gardens don't last may be one of their perverse charms. They are ephemeral, the intersection of time, place, and plants plus the effort of one or the efforts of many. Castle Cottage is a perfect example. While the National Trust owns it, since William Heelis's death in 1945 it has primarily been a private residence. Beatrix's niece Joan Duke and her husband lived at Castle Cottage and terraced the

garden, changing out plants, and adding features of their own including a topiary bird.

Take time to wander in Sawrey. Below the village is Esthwaite Water, where you can see Mr. Jeremy Fisher's reeds and the signposts that appear behind Pigling Bland and Alexander. Along the roads, depending on the season you will still find wild balsam and hawthorn and blackberries. There are patches of yellow loosestrife, escapees from a garden, perhaps hers.



Castle Cottage, 1946, during the Dukes' tenure

Above the village is Moss Eccles Tarn, beloved of Beatrix and Willie Heelis. If you walk up Stony Lane and keep walking directly up hill, you will find it. The footing is a bit rough and you will get a good workout, but it is well worth it. You may have to cross a stile, but never climb the walls. Beatrix welcomed visitors on her land, but once remembered "the exasperation of seeing a large party of young women steeple-chasing over a succession of newly cammed walls in pursuit of mushrooms." She liked seeing them up on the fells, "if they would shut the gates when they come down again."



Sheep safely grazing on Heelis land

From the fells, you can see Sawrey from above, and the broader landscape of the Southern Lakes that Beatrix Potter loved. The fields are dotted with sheep and cows, placidly ovine and bovine, busy with grazing and unlikely to bother the hapless tourist. Wildflowers bloom there. Moss Eccles Tarn seems unlikely, a lake at this high elevation, like some kind of inverse drainage. If you are lucky, the water lilies will be blooming there, just as Beatrix hoped when she planted them with her niece. If you have the time, you can follow the footpath next to Wilfin Beck and descend into Far Sawrey.

If you want a sense of the opulent gardens that were prevalent in Mr. and Mrs. Potter's Lakeland, you can visit many of the grand houses that were their summer homes. The house where Beatrix first stayed with her family in 1896 is still in Sawrey, though its name had changed from Lakefield to Ees Wyke by the time the Potters returned there in 1902. It is still available to let, though by the room, as it is now a country house hotel. If you can stay there or partake of a meal in its dining room, you will get a hint, a whisper, of the lifestyle that the Potters maintained and that Beatrix largely left behind in her day-to-day life as Mrs. William Heelis. The garden that Beatrix painted is gone, though the pristine views over Esthwaite Water to the Langdale Pikes are unchanged.

In Hawkshead itself, William Heelis's old law offices are now the Beatrix Potter Gallery, where the National Trust displays a rotating selection of its Potter watercolors, first editions, and other treasures. Look carefully. Almost any exhibit will include images of plants, flowers, and gardens.

On the road from Hawkshead to Ambleside, you will pass the

entrance gate for Belmont Hall, the stately stone house that once belonged to Beatrix's friend, Rebecca Owen. Its walled garden, which Miss Owen was convinced was haunted by the ghost of a cloistered monk, is now a ghost itself. Only the walls remain, and the memory that Beatrix adopted the garden after she bought the property from her friend in 1938. Belmont, like so much of the land in the Sawrey valley, was part of Beatrix Potter's gift to the National Trust. Of late, the house and the garden beds that skirt it have been lovingly restored into a venue for weekend parties, weddings, and conferences.

Wray Castle, the Potters' 1882 rental, still perches above Windermere like a picturesque transplant from Sir Walter Scott. A property of the National Trust, the house is open in season, but the grounds are open year-round from dawn to dusk. The remains of the kitchen garden are there, with a surprising serpentine wall. The fernery is empty, awaiting a gardener with a fascination for fronds. A princely collection of specimen trees graces the Wray property, including the great conifers that Beatrix admired and the mulberry that, tradition has it, Wordsworth planted on his first visit. You can walk the lanes between Wray and Hawkshead that Beatrix explored on foot and in her pony cart.

A visit to the Armitage in Ambleside is a must. The Armitage is a quirky small gem of a museum, founded by a group of intellectuals in 1912 to preserve the heritage of their beloved Lakes. Beatrix chose the Armitage as the ultimate destination for her collection of natural history paintings—hundreds of funguses, with a smattering of fish, fossils, and Roman archaeological finds. In the gallery today you will find a sampling of Potter's paintings on display. The library upstairs includes books on topics of natural and local history from Beatrix's collection, including some of her father's and grandfather's books.



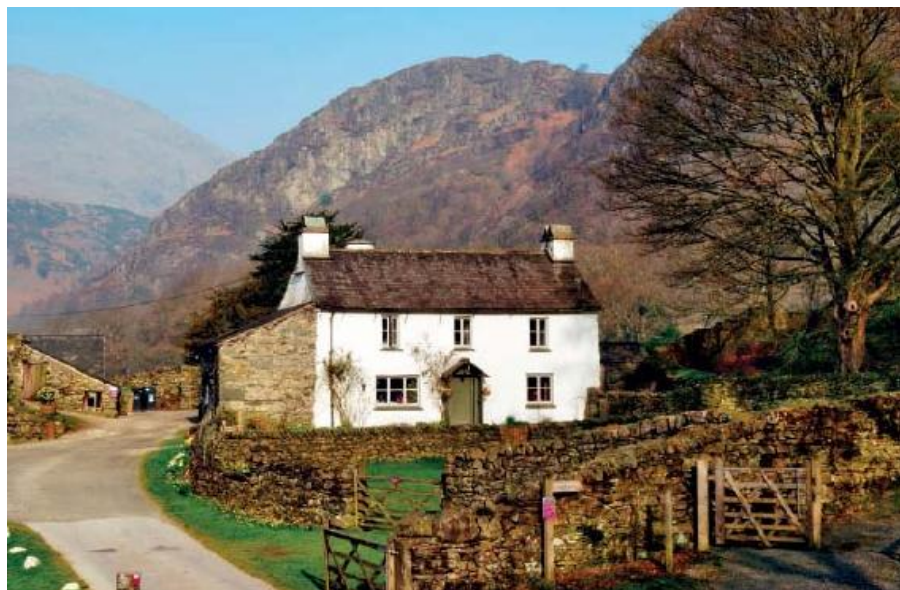
Belmont Hall with its restored gardens near the house

From Ambleside, you might go west toward Coniston and spend the night at Yew Tree Farm, part of the Monk Coniston Estate that Beatrix purchased in 1930. Yew Tree Farm was the stand-in for shots of Hill Top Farm in the Renée Zellweger movie, *Miss Potter*. The front garden reflects the set designer's intent. Produce of Yew Tree Farm furnishes the table at the B&B. The farm family that runs Yew Tree actively manages their flocks of Herdwick sheep in accordance with Potter's wishes and the National Trust's management policies.

Turning south from Ambleside along Windermere's eastern shore, Beatrix Potter would be pleased to find that her Gaddum cousins' home, Brockhole, is now the Lake District National Park's Visitor Centre. Its thirty-acre gardens with terraces and rose beds were grand in comparison with Beatrix's cottage plantings. Still, cousin Edith was always so generous with cuttings.

Just south from Brockhole is a hairpin turn that takes you up out of the valley to Holehird. Beatrix and her family stayed there in 1889 with its greenhouses and kitchen garden, but she was so sick she could barely walk. When they returned in 1895, she and Bertram "found the pleasant old gardener dead and gone, and a bustling self-important personage in his place, who [gave] Bertram ... permission to pick raspberries." Beatrix was amused by the new gardener's attitude; Bertram was exasperated. Today they would both be amazed by the changes to the gardens. After the Potters' holiday sojourns there,

William Grimble Groves bought Holehird in 1897. Groves, like the Gaddums, hired Thomas Mawson to improve his garden. Mawson added on to the greenhouses to house Groves's substantial orchid collection and dammed a stream to create a series of descending water gardens. With its spectacular prospect of the Langdale and Conistone Fells, Holehird is one of the few of the Potters' Lakeland holiday rentals without a water view, so perhaps Groves was rectifying that.



Yew Tree Farm, preserved by Beatrix Potter, the National Trust, and generations of dedicated farmers

Holehird at present is the headquarters of the Lakeland Horticultural Society, founded in 1969. The walled garden that Beatrix would have known, where Bertram picked raspberries and where they passed the time with the pleasant old gardener, is now a spectacular display garden with colorful island beds and deep borders. Beatrix the painter would have appreciated the color combinations, the complements and harmonies, in the carefully tended gardens, shepherded through the seasons by a group of dedicated volunteers.

About a mile further up toward Kirkstone Pass is Troutbeck Park Farm, the 1,900-acre sheep farm of which she was so proud. A Potter landscape gardening pilgrimage would not be complete without seeing the panoramas of Windermere that unfold below it, and the mature stands of trees that she first recommended planting in the 1920s. Two streams, Trout Beck and Hagg Beck, run akimbo on either side of the fell. "They meet and unite below the southern crags, making the tableland almost an island, an island haunted by the sounds that creep

in running water,” Potter wrote in an essay called “The Lonely Hills.” She saw the magic of the land; it was there she first spotted the little tracks of the Fairy Caravan.

South to Bowness, you can tread other Beatrix Potter paths. In 1925, Cockshott Point, lake frontage on the eastern shore of Windermere, was on the brink of development. To support the National Trust’s efforts to save it, Beatrix sent fifty autographed Peter Rabbit drawings to a contact in America to sell on her behalf. “Peter Rabbit is not begging for himself,” she wrote. “Alas! so many of our heirlooms—our pictures, our ancient books, even our old timbered houses—are crossing the Atlantic—would not American friends help to save a bit of our scenery?” The woodland and meadow trails that wind along the half-mile of shore are proof of her success.



Holehird Gardens, maintained by the Lakeland Horticultural Society



Peter Rabbit Garden at The World of Beatrix Potter Attraction



The scarecrow in rabbit's clothing from *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*

In the town center, The World of Beatrix Potter Attraction has made a substantial contribution to garden enthusiasts by reimagining her horticultural territory. It brings her illustrations and cottage garden style to life. True to her Arts & Crafts bent, the builders of the Peter Rabbit Garden used locally sourced brick and slate and installed a greenhouse built by the great-grandson of Beatrix's shepherd-friend, Tom Storey. Heirloom fruits, flowers, and vegetables are carefully tended. Chelsea Gold Medal-winning designer Richard Lucas meticulously researched the project, down to identifying the likely variety of radish ('Long Scarlet') that Peter consumes in what is arguably Beatrix Potter's most iconic image.



Peter Rabbit eating radishes

Continuing south along Windermere, you can dine and reside in style at another country house, Lindeth Howe, occupied by the Potters as a summer home and purchased by Mrs. Potter in her widowhood. If the garden's former glories have somewhat waned, the views of the lake are still superb.

The best place to end this tour of Beatrix Potter's gardens is in your own. Plant a gooseberry or a foxglove, as she did. Steal ideas, if not plants, from other people's gardens. Be inspired by Beatrix Potter's books to grow a potato, a rose, or a radish. If you have only a windowsill, try a geranium. Observe your garden, its progress in every season, and be happy every year that you can see the snowdrops bloom again.

I have lots of flowers, I am very fond of my garden, it is a regular old

fashioned farm garden, with a box hedge round the flower bed, and moss roses and pansies and black currants & strawberries and peas—and big sage bushes for Jemima, but onions always do badly. I have tall white bell flowers I am fond of, they are just going over, next there will be phlox; and last come the michaelmas daisies & chrysanthemums. Then soon after Christmas we have snowdrops, they grow wild and come up all over the garden & orchard, and in some of the woods.



THE END



Snowdrops

BEATRIX POTTER'S PLANTS

This section consists of two tables: “Plants Beatrix Potter Grew in Her Gardens” and “Plants in Beatrix Potter’s Books.” The plant information in the tables is organized by common name, as was Beatrix Potter’s preference. Because common names at times overlap—moss rose to some refers to a shrubby member of the genus *Rosa* and to others an annual *Portulaca*—I have deferred to usage in a book that Beatrix owned, David Thomson’s *Handy Book of the Flower-Garden* (1868). Her copy is still at Hill Top Farm.

The plants that Beatrix Potter grew in her gardens are documented by mentions in her surviving letters, reminiscences of friends and neighbors, the jottings of visitors, and period photographs. The abbreviations in the primary sources are keyed to the list on [pages 309–310](#). Where there are multiple sources for a plant, only one is included. While Beatrix Potter grew fruits and flowers mixed together, I have separated fruits as well as vegetables into distinct categories in this table.



We love our little garden from *Cecily Parsley’s Nursery Rhymes*

The second table, showing the plants that she illustrated or wrote about in her books, expands the list for Beatrix Potter garden aficionados. Although there is less certainty that she grew all of these plants, she appreciated them enough to make them part of her durable creations. I have omitted spinoffs such as games and painting books.

This table also serves as a chronological list of all books written by Beatrix Potter; the date refers to the year of the first commercial publication.

PLANTS BEATRIX POTTER GREW IN HER GARDENS

Common name	Botanical name	Type	Primary source
aconite, winter	<i>Eranthis hyemalis</i>	perennial	Letter to M. Perry, 20 Feb 1934; <i>BPA</i> , p. 56.
anemone, Japanese	<i>Anemone japonica</i>	perennial	Letter to M. Warne, 12 Oct 1906; <i>Letters</i> , p. 148.
apple	<i>Malus domestica</i>	fruit	Letter to M. Wight, 26 June 1942; <i>Letters</i> , p. 450.
azalea	<i>Rhododendron</i> spp.	shrub	Letter to L. Choyce, 13 May 1921; <i>TCL</i> , p. 19.
bean, broad	<i>Vicia faba</i>	vegetable	Letter to L. Choyce, 7 Apr 1934; <i>TCL</i> , p. 54.
beet	<i>Beta vulgaris</i>	vegetable	Letter to H. Fish, 13 Nov 1941; <i>BPA</i> , p. 158.
bellflower, white	<i>Campanula lactiflora</i> 'Alba'	perennial	Letter to Dulcie (no last name), 29 July 1924; <i>LTC</i> , p. 184.
blackberry	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	fruit	Letter to L. Choyce, 16 Aug 1943; <i>TCL</i> , p. 74.
bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	perennial	Letter to H. Coolidge, 28 June 1928; <i>BPA</i> , p. 16.
box(wood)	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	shrub	Letter to Dulcie, 29 July 1924; <i>LTC</i> , p. 184.
broccoli	<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>italica</i>	vegetable	Letter to L. Choyce, 26 May 1943; <i>TCL</i> , p. 70.
broom, Scotch	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	perennial	Letter to L. Choyce, 23 Aug 1924; <i>TCL</i> , p. 38.
Brussels sprout	<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>gemmifera</i>	vegetable	Letter to L. Choyce, 29 June 1943; <i>TCL</i> , p. 72.
cabbage	<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>capitata</i>	vegetable	Letter to J. Steel, 2 June 1931; <i>DIDJ</i> , p. 47.
cactus, orchid	<i>Epiphyllum</i> cv.	houseplant	Letter to L. Choyce, 19 July 1939; <i>TCL</i> , p. 64.
carrot	<i>Daucus carota</i>	vegetable	Letter to H. Fish, 13 Nov 1941; <i>BPA</i> , p. 158.
cauliflower	<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>botrytis</i>	vegetable	Letter to L. Choyce, 29 June 1943; <i>TCL</i> , p. 72.
celery	<i>Apium graveolens</i> var. <i>dulce</i>	vegetable	Letter to L. Choyce, 20 Oct 1934; <i>TCL</i> , p. 51.

Common name	Botanical name	Type	Primary source
chrysanthemum	<i>Chrysanthemum</i> hybrids	perennial	Letter to Dulcie, 29 July 1924; <i>LTC</i> , p. 184.
clematis	<i>Clematis</i> spp.	vine	Sequel to <i>Caravan</i> ; <i>HWBP</i> , p. 312.
columbine	<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	perennial	NT Archives Photo HIL R 169 3
corn	<i>Zea mays</i>	feed crop	Letter to C. Cooper, 10 Sep 1936; NT Archives.
crabapple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	fruit	Letter to L. Choyce, 16 Aug 1943; <i>Letters</i> , p. 74.
crocus, cloth-of-gold	<i>Crocus angustifolius</i>	perennial	Letter to M. Perry, 20 Feb 1934; <i>BPA</i> , p. 56.
crown imperial	<i>Fritillaria imperialis</i>	perennial	Letter to M. Wame, 6 Apr 1911; FLP Archive.
currant, black	<i>Ribes nigrum</i>	fruit	Letter to Dulcie, 29 July 1924; <i>LTC</i> , p. 184.
daffodil	<i>Narcissus</i> cv.	perennial	Letter to C. Clark, 8 Apr 1934; <i>Letters</i> , p. 362.
daffodil, double	<i>Narcissus</i> , Division 4	perennial	Letter to M. Wame, 12 Mar 1914; unpublished.
daffodil, wild	<i>Narcissus pseudonarcissus</i>	perennial	Letter to C. Clark, 8 April 1934; <i>Letters</i> , p. 362.
dahlia	<i>Dahlia</i> cv.	annual	Letter to L. Choyce, 16 Oct 1925; <i>TCL</i> , p. 44.
damson	<i>Prunus domestica</i> subsp. <i>insititia</i>	fruit	Letter to L. Choyce, 12 May 1924; <i>TCL</i> , p. 35.
fern, ostrich	<i>Matteuccia struthiopteris</i>	perennial	NT Archives Photo 145997_HD21
fern, wall-rue	<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	perennial	Letter to M. Wame, 18 July 1906; <i>Letters</i> , p. 142.
forget-me-not	<i>Myosotis sylvatica</i>	biennial	Memories of Susan Ludbrook; <i>BPSN</i> 72 April 1999, p. 6.
foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	biennial	Memories of Anne C. Moore; <i>SIT</i> , p. 16.
fuchsia, red	<i>Fuchsia</i> spp.	perennial	Letter to M. Wame, 30 Sep 1906; <i>Letters</i> , p. 146.
gentian, blue	<i>Gentiana</i> spp.	perennial	Sequel to <i>Caravan</i> ; <i>HWBP</i> , p. 312.

Common name	Botanical name	Type	Primary source
geranium, zonal	<i>Pelargonium xhortorum</i>	houseplant	Letter to D. Hammond, Apr 1939; <i>Letters</i> , p. 403.
goatsbeard	<i>Aranus dioicus</i>	perennial	NT Archives Photo HIL R 169 17
gooseberry	<i>Ribes grossularia</i>	fruit	Letter to L. Choyce, 12 Apr 1934; <i>TCL</i> p. 49.
grape	<i>Vitis vinifera</i>	fruit	Letter to M. Warne, 22 Aug 1912; <i>BPL</i> , p. 199.
hay	mixed grasses, etc.	feed crop	Letter to L. Choyce; 19 Sep 1922; <i>TCL</i> , p. 20.
holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	shrub	Letter to M. Perry, 12 Dec 1935; <i>BPA</i> , p. 62.
hollyhock	<i>Alcea rosea</i>	annual	Elizabeth Stevens, <i>The Horn Book Magazine</i> , Apr 1958, pp. 131-136.
honesty	<i>Lunaria annua</i>	biennial	Letter to M. Warne, 12 Oct 1906; <i>Letters</i> , p. 148.
honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera</i> spp.	vine	Sequel to <i>Caravan</i> ; <i>HWBP</i> , p. 312.
houseleek	<i>Sempervivum tectorum</i>	perennial	Sequel to <i>Caravan</i> ; <i>HWBP</i> , p. 312.
hyacinth	<i>Hyacinthus orientalis</i>	perennial	Letter to N. Moore, 6 Apr 1896; <i>LTC</i> , pp. 38-39.
iris	<i>Iris germanica</i>	perennial	Letter to C. Cooper, 10 Sep 1936; NT Archives.
iris	<i>Iris unguicularis</i> (syn. <i>I. stylosa</i>)	perennial	Letter to C. Cooper, 10 Sep 1936; NT Archives.
jessamine, winter	<i>Jasminum nudiflorum</i>	shrub	Letter to M. Perry, 23 Jan 1943; <i>BPA</i> , p. 194.
larch	<i>Larix decidua</i>	tree	Letter to L. Choyce, 9 Dec 1939; <i>TCL</i> , p. 67.
laurel	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	shrub	Letter to M. Warne, 30 Sep 1906; <i>Letters</i> , p. 146.
lavender	<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	perennial	Letter to M. Warne, 12 Oct 1906; <i>Letters</i> , p. 148.
leek	<i>Allium ampeloprasum</i> var. <i>porrum</i>	vegetable	Letter to H. Fish, 13 Nov 1941; <i>BPA</i> , p. 158.
lettuce	<i>Lactuca sativa</i>	vegetable	Letter to L. Choyce, 29 June 1943; <i>TCL</i> , p. 72.

Common name	Botanical name	Type	Primary source
lilac	<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>	shrub	Letter to L. Choyce, 13 May 1921; TCL, p. 19.
lilac, California	<i>Ceanothus americanus</i>	shrub	Letter to C. Clark, 18 Mar 1939; BPL, p. 396.
lily	<i>Lilium</i> spp.	perennial	Letter to M. Warne, 12 Oct 1906; Letters, p. 149.
London pride	<i>Saxifraga xurbium</i>	perennial	Letter to M. Warne, 6 Sep 1906; Letters, p.143.
loosestrife, yellow	<i>Lysimachia punctata</i>	perennial	Letter to L. Choyce, 23 Aug 1924; TCL, p. 38.
magnolia	<i>Magnolia</i> spp.	tree	Letter to D. Hammond, 30 Sep 1936; unpublished.
mangold	<i>Beta vulgaris</i> subsp. <i>vulgaris</i>	feed crop	Letter to L. Choyce, 26 May 1943; TCL, p. 70.
marrow, vegetable	<i>Cucurbita pepo</i>	vegetable	Letter to L. Choyce, 16 Aug 1943; TCL, p. 74.
Michaelmas daisy	<i>Aster</i> spp.	perennial	Letter to Dulcie, 29 July 1924; LTC, p. 184.
mignonette	<i>Reseda odorata</i>	annual	Elizabeth Stevens, <i>The Horn Book Magazine</i> , Apr 1958, pp. 131-136.
oat	<i>Avena sativa</i>	feed crop	Letter to L. Choyce, 19 Sep 1922; TCL, p. 20.
onion	<i>Allium cepa</i>	vegetable	Letter to H. Fish, 13 Nov 1941; BPA, p. 158.
pansy	<i>Viola</i> spp. and hybrids	annual	Letter to Dulcie, 29 July 1924; LTC, p. 184.
pea	<i>Pisum sativum</i>	vegetable	Letter to Dulcie, 29 July 1924; LTC, p. 184.
pear	<i>Pyrus communis</i>	fruit	Letter to L. Warne, 12 Aug 1911; LTC, p. 128.
peony	<i>Paeonia lactiflora</i>	perennial	NT Archives Photo HIL 169 2
phlox	<i>Phlox paniculata</i>	perennial	Letter to Dulcie, 29 July 1924; LTC, p. 184.
pink	<i>Dianthus caryophyllus</i>	perennial	Letter to L. Choyce, 29 June 1943; TCL, p. 72.
plum	<i>Prunus domestica</i>	fruit	Letter to L. Choyce, 2 May 1923; TCL, p. 26.

Common name	Botanical name	Type	Primary source
poppy, opium	<i>Papaver somniferum</i>	annual	NT Archives Photo HIL R 169 32
potato	<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>	vegetable	Letter to L. Choyce, 29 June 1943; TCL, p. 72.
primrose, Japanese	<i>Primula japonica</i>	perennial	Letter to M. Warne, 16 Sep 1909; FWA.
primrose, polyanthus	<i>Primula</i> × <i>polyantha</i>	perennial	Letter to M. Warne, 6 Apr 1911; FLP Archive.
privet	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	shrub	Letter to A. C. Moore, 25 May 1940; BPA, p. 105.
quince, Japanese (Japanese)	<i>Chaenomeles japonica</i> (syn. <i>Pyrus japonica</i>)	shrub	Sequel to <i>Caravan</i> ; <i>HWBP</i> , p. 312.
raspberry	<i>Rubus idaeus</i>	fruit	Interview with Harry and Ethel Byers, 17 January 1991, (NT).
rhododendron	<i>Rhododendron</i> spp.	shrub	Letter to M. Warne, 30 Sep 1906; <i>Letters</i> , p. 146.
rhododendron, alpine	<i>Rhododendron</i> <i>ferrugineum</i>	shrub	Letter to L. Choyce, 16 Oct 1925; TCL, p. 44.
rhubarb	<i>Rheum rhubarbarum</i>	vegetable	Memories of C. Clark; <i>TBP</i> , p. 85.
rock, white	<i>Aubrieta deltoidea</i>	perennial	Letter to M. Warne, 30 Sep 1906; <i>Letters</i> , p. 146.
rose	<i>Rosa</i> spp.	shrub	Elizabeth Stevens, <i>The Horn Book</i> <i>Magazine</i> , Apr 1958, pp. 131-136.
rose, bourbon	<i>Rosa</i> 'Queen of Bourbons'	shrub	Memories of Joan Duke, 1987, Ambleside Oral History Project.
rose, moss	<i>Rosa communis</i>	shrub	Letter to Dulcie, 29 Jul 1924; <i>LTC</i> , p. 184.
rose, pink cabbage	<i>Rosa</i> × <i>centifolia</i>	shrub	Sequel to <i>Caravan</i> ; <i>HWBP</i> , p. 312.
rosemary	<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	perennial	Sequel to <i>Caravan</i> ; <i>HWBP</i> , p. 312.
sage	<i>Salvia officinalis</i>	perennial	Letter to Dulcie, 29 July 1924; <i>LTC</i> , p. 184.
saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga rosacea</i>	perennial	Letter to M. Warne, 6 Sep 1906; <i>Letters</i> , p. 143.
Scotch fir	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	tree	NT Archives Photo HIL 169 27d

Common name	Botanical name	Type	Primary source
sea pink	<i>Armeria maritima</i>	perennial	Letter to J. Shapland, 26 Sep 1913; <i>The Times</i> , 9 Mar 2006.
snapdragon	<i>Antirrhinum majus</i>	annual	Elizabeth Stevens, <i>The Horn Book Magazine</i> , Apr 1958, pp. 131-136.
snowdrop	<i>Galanthus nivalis</i>	perennial	Letter to M. Perry, 4 Feb 1935; <i>BPA</i> , p. 64
Solomon's seal	<i>Polygonatum giganteum</i>	perennial	NT Archives Photo HIL 169 2
spinach	<i>Spinacia oleracea</i>	vegetable	Letter to H. Fish, 13 Nov 1941; <i>BPA</i> , p. 158.
spiraea	<i>Spiraea</i> spp.	shrub	Letter to C. Clark, 18 Mar 1939; <i>Letters</i> , p. 396.
St. John's wort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	perennial	Sequel to <i>Caravan</i> ; <i>HWBP</i> , p. 312.
stock	<i>Matthiola</i> spp.	annual	Elizabeth Stevens, <i>The Horn Book Magazine</i> , Apr 1958, pp. 131-136.
strawberry	<i>Fragaria xananassa</i>	perennial	Letter to Dulcie, 29 July 1924; <i>LTC</i> , p. 184.
sweet pea	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i>	annual	NT Archives Photo HIL R 169 28
sweet william	<i>Dianthus barbatus</i>	biennial	Letter to M. Warne, 12 Oct 1906; <i>Letters</i> , p. 148.
syringa	<i>Philadelphus coronarius</i>	shrub	Letter to M. Warne, 30 Sep 1906; <i>Letters</i> , p. 146.
tulip	<i>Tulipa</i> cv.	perennial	Letter to M. Perry, 12 Dec 1934; <i>BPA</i> , p. 61.
turnip	<i>Brassica rapa</i> var. <i>rapa</i>	feed crop	Letter to L. Choyce, 26 May 1943; <i>TCL</i> , p. 70.
violet	<i>Viola</i> spp.	perennial	Letter to M. Warne, 12 Oct 1906; <i>Letters</i> , p. 148.
wallflower	<i>Cheiranthus cheiri</i>	biennial	Sequel to <i>Caravan</i> ; <i>HWBP</i> , p. 312.
wisteria	<i>Wisteria</i> spp.	vine	Sequel to <i>Caravan</i> ; <i>HWBP</i> , p. 312.
witch-hazel	<i>Hamamelis mollis</i>	shrub	Letter to M. Perry, 4 Feb 1935; <i>BPA</i> , p. 64.
zinnia	<i>Zinnia elegans</i>	annual	NT Archives Photo HIL R 169 32

PLANTS IN BEATRIX POTTER'S BOOKS

Book	Date	Common name	Botanical name (shown with first instance)	Text	Art
<i>The Tale of Peter Rabbit</i>	1902	bean, French	<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>	+	+
		blackberry	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	+	+
		cabbage	<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>capitata</i>	+	+
		chamomile (tea)	<i>Matricaria recutita</i>	+	
		cucumber	<i>Cucumis sativus</i>	+	
		currant, black	<i>Ribes nigrum</i>	+	
		fir	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>	+	+
		geranium, zonal	<i>Pelargonium</i> × <i>hortorum</i>		+
		gooseberry	<i>Ribes grossularia</i>	+	+
		lettuce	<i>Lactuca sativa</i>	+	
		nasturtium	<i>Tropaeolum majus</i>		+
		onion	<i>Allium cepa</i>		+
		parsley	<i>Petroselinum hortense</i>	+	
		pea	<i>Pisum sativum</i>	+	
		potato	<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>		+
		radish	<i>Raphanus sativus</i>	+	+
		turnip	<i>Brassica rapa</i> var. <i>rapa</i>		+
<i>The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin</i>	1903	beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	+	+
		cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	+	
		chestnut	<i>Castanea sativa</i>	+	
		crabapple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	+	+
		dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	+	
		fir		+	+
		hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	+	
		oak	<i>Quercus</i> spp.	+	+

Book	Date	Common name	Botanical name (shown with first instance)	Text	Art
<i>The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin</i> (continued)		pine	<i>Pinus</i> spp.	+	
		plum	<i>Prunus domestica</i>	+	
		rose, dog	<i>Rosa canina</i>	+	
		stinging nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	+	
		strawberry	<i>Fragaria × ananassa</i>	+	
<i>The Tailor of Gloucester</i> (flowers in embroidery)	1903	cornflower	<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>	+	
		pansy	<i>Viola × hybridus</i>	+	
		poppy	<i>Papaver</i> spp.	+	
		rose	<i>Rosa</i> spp.	+	
<i>The Tale of Benjamin Bunny</i>	1904	bean, broad	<i>Vicia faba</i>		
		chamomile		+	
		carnation	<i>Dianthus</i> spp.		+
		cherry		+	
		fir		+	
		lavender	<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	+	+
		lettuce		+	+
		onion		+	+
		pear	<i>Pyrus communis</i>	+	+
<i>The Tale of Two Bad Mice</i>	1904	(no live plants)			
<i>The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle</i>	1905	bracken fern	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	+	+
		currant	<i>Ribes</i> spp.	+	
		daisy, lawn	<i>Bellis perennis</i>		+

Book	Date	Common name	Botanical name (shown with first instance)	Text	Art
<i>The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle</i> (continued)		forget-me-not	<i>Myosotis scorpioides</i>		+
		foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>		+
		onion		+	
		rush	<i>Juncus</i> spp.	+	
<i>The Tale of the Pie and the Patty-Pan</i>	1905	carnation			+
		clematis	<i>Clematis</i> spp.		+
		daisy, lawn			+
		dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>		+
		geranium			+
		Kenilworth ivy	<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>		+
		lily, tiger	<i>Lilium lancifolium</i>		+
		mallow, musk	<i>Malva moschata</i>		+
		phlox	<i>Phlox paniculata</i>		+
		poppy, Welsh	<i>Meconopsis cambrica</i>		+
		rose			+
		snapdragon	<i>Antirrhinum majus</i>		+
<i>The Tale of Mr. Jeremy Fisher</i>	1906	buttercup, marsh	<i>Caltha palustris</i>	+	+
		forget-me-not			+
		ragged robin	<i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i>		+
		reed	<i>Juncus</i> spp.	+	+
		water lily	<i>Nymphaea alba</i>	+	+
		water plant	<i>Sagittaria</i> spp.	+	+

Book	Date	Common name	Botanical name (shown with first instance)	Text	Art
<i>The Story of A Fierce Bad Rabbit</i>	1906	carrot	<i>Daucus carota</i>	+	+
<i>The Story of Miss Moppet</i>	1906	(no plants)			
<i>The Tale of Tom Kitten</i>	1907	anemone, Japanese	<i>Anemone japonica</i>		+
		carnation			+
		clematis			+
		daffodil	<i>Narcissus</i> cv.		+
		fern	<i>Matteuccia struthiopteris</i>	+	+
		fern, wall-rue	<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>		+
		forget-me-not			+
		geranium			+
		iris	<i>Iris germanica</i>		+
		pansy			+
		peony	<i>Paeonia lactiflora</i>		+
		rhododendron	<i>Rhododendron</i> spp.		+
		rose			+
		rose, Scots yellow	<i>Rosa spinosissima</i>		+
		snapdragon			+
		wallflower	<i>Cheiranthus cheiri</i>		+
		water lily			+
		water plant			+
<i>The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck</i>	1908	foxglove		+	+
		mint	<i>Mentha</i> spp.	+	
		onion		+	+

Book	Date	Common name	Botanical name (shown with first instance)	Text	Art
<i>The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck</i> (continued)		rhubarb	<i>Rheum rhabarbarum</i>	+	
		rose			+
		sage	<i>Salvia officinalis</i>	+	+
		thyme	<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	+	
<i>The Roly-Poly Pudding</i> later renamed <i>The Tale of Samuel Whiskers</i>	1908	geranium			+
		fern, wall-rue			+
		horse-chestnut	<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>		+
		lilac	<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>		+
		rose			+
<i>The Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies</i>	1909	boxwood	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>		+
		cabbage		+	+
		cyclamen	<i>Cyclamen europaeum</i>		+
		fuchsia	<i>Fuchsia</i> hybrid		+
		geranium			+
		lettuce		+	+
		marigold, French	<i>Tagetes patula</i>		+
		marrow, vegetable	<i>Cucurbita pepo</i>	+	+
		pansy			+
		rose			+
		turnip		+	

Book	Date	Common name	Botanical name (shown with first instance)	Text	Art
<i>The Tale of Ginger and Pickles</i>	1909	wisteria	<i>Wisteria</i> spp.		+
		wood sorrel	<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>		+
<i>The Tale of Mrs. Tittlemouse</i>	1910	cherry		+	
		clover, white	<i>Trifolium repens</i>		+
		cowslip	<i>Primula veris</i>	+	
		oak (acorn)		+	
		pennywort	<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>		+
		thistle	<i>Cirsium</i> spp.	+	+
<i>The Tale of Timmy Tiptoes</i>	1911	maple	<i>Acer</i> spp.		+
<i>The Tale of Mr. Tod</i>	1912	bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	+	+
		cabbage		+	+
		bracken fern			+
		cowslip		+	
		dandelion		+	
		lavender		+	
		oak		+	
		pig nut	<i>Conopodium majus</i>	+	
		willow	<i>Salix</i> spp.	+	
		wood sorrel			
<i>The Tale of Pigling Bland</i>	1913	carrot		+	+
		larkspur	<i>Consolida ambigua</i>		+
		potato		+	

Book	Date	Common name	Botanical name (shown with first instance)	Text	Art
<i>Appley Dapply's Nursery Rhymes</i>	1917	ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	+	+
		carrot			+
		potato		+	+
<i>The Tale of Johnny Town-Mouse</i>	1918	cabbage		+	+
		carnation		+	+
		corn		+	
		daisy, lawn			+
		lords-and-ladies	<i>Arum maculatum</i>		+
		pansy		+	+
		pea		+	+
		pink	<i>Dianthus caryophyllus</i>	+	
		rose		+	
		strawberry		+	+
		violet	<i>Viola</i> spp.	+	+
<i>Cecily Parsley's Nursery Rhymes</i>	1922	bluebell			+
		carrot		+	+
		cowslip			+
		gooseberry			+
		potato			+
		turnip			+
<i>Peter Rabbit's Almanac for 1929</i>	1928	apple	<i>Malus domestica</i>		+
		boxwood			+
		cabbage			+

Book	Date	Common name	Botanical name (shown with first instance)	Text	Art
<i>Peter Rabbit's Almanac for 1929</i> (continued)		daffodil			+
		daffodil, wild	<i>Narcissus pseudonarcissus</i>		+
		fern, wall-rue			+
		geranium			+
		ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>		+
		laurel	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>		+
		pansy			+
		primrose, English	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>		+
<i>The Fairy Caravan</i>	1929	snowdrop	<i>Galanthus nivalis</i>		+
		alder	<i>Alnus</i> spp.	+	
		apple		+	
		balm	<i>Melissa officinalis</i>	+	
		beech		+	
		birch	<i>Betula</i> spp.	+	
		bluebell		+	
		bracken fern		+	
		bramble	<i>Rubus</i> spp.	+	
		broom, Scotch	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	+	
		buttercup	<i>Ranunculus</i> spp.	+	
		carrot		+	
		cedar	<i>Cedrus libanotica</i>	+	+
		cherry		+	
		chestnut		+	
		clover		+	

Book	Date	Common name	Botanical name (shown with first instance)	Text	Art
<i>The Fairy Caravan</i> (continued)		corn		+	
		cowslip		+	
		crabapple		+	
		currant, red	<i>Ribes rubrum</i>	+	
		daffodil, wild		+	
		daisy, lawn		+	
		daylily	<i>Hemerocallis flava</i>	+	
		elderberry	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	+	
		elm	<i>Ulmus campestris</i>	+	
		fair-maids-of-France	<i>Ranunculus aconitifolius</i>	+	
		fern		+	
		fir		+	
		flax	<i>Linum usitatissimum</i>	+	
		forget-me-not		+	
		foxglove		+	
		fungi/toadstool	<i>Amanita</i> spp.	+	
		germander	<i>Teucrium chamaedrys</i>	+	
		ginger, green	<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	+	
		gooseberry		+	
		grass, bent	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	+	
		ivy, ground	<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	+	
		hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	+	
		hazel		+	
		holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	+	
		ivy		+	
		kesh	<i>Pastinaca sativa</i>	+	

Book	Date	Common name	Botanical name (shown with first instance)	Text	Art
<i>The Fairy Caravan</i> (continued)		lady's slipper	<i>Cypripedium calceolus</i>	+	
		lady's smock	<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	+	
		lamb's toes	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	+	
		larch	<i>Larix decidua</i>	+	
		lords-and-ladies		+	
		mary bud	<i>Calendula officinalis</i>	+	
		meadowsweet	<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	+	
		milkmaid	<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	+	
		milkwort	<i>Polygala vulgaris</i>	+	
		oak		+	
		onion		+	
		orchid, spotted	<i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i>	+	
		parsley, cow	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	+	
		pear		+	
		peony		+	
		periwinkle	<i>Vinca minor</i>	+	
		pine		+	
		potato		+	
		primrose, English		+	
		ragged robin		+	
		raspberry	<i>Rubus idaeus</i>	+	
		rue (herb of grace)	<i>Ruta graveolens</i>	+	
		rush		+	
		rose		+	
		rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	+	
		savin	<i>Juniperus sabina</i>	+	

Book	Date	Common name	Botanical name (shown with first instance)	Text	Art
<i>The Fairy Caravan</i> (continued)		sele	unidentified	+	
		snowdrop		+	
		speedwell	<i>Veronica</i> spp.	+	
		spruce	<i>Picea</i> spp.	+	
		stinging nettle		+	
		strawberry, wild	<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	+	
		sycamore		+	
		violet		+	
		wallflower		+	
		yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	+	
<i>The Tale of Little Pig Robinson</i>	1930	apple		+	
		asparagus	<i>Asparagus officinalis</i>	+	
		bong tree	<i>Araucaria heterophylla</i>	+	+
		breadfruit	<i>Artocarpus altilis</i>	+	
		broccoli	<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>italica</i>	+	
		buttercup		+	
		cabbage		+	
		cauliflower	<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>botrytis</i>	+	+
		corn		+	
		daffodil		+	
		daisy, lawn		+	
		elm		+	
		onion		+	
		pea		+	
		potato		+	

Book	Date	Common name	Botanical name (shown with first instance)	Text	Art
<i>The Tale of Little Pig Robinson</i> (continued)		primrose, English		+	
		pussy willow	<i>Salix discolor</i>	+	
		rhubarb		+	
		turnip		+	
		water crowfoot	<i>Ranunculus aquatilis</i>	+	
		wheat	<i>Triticum</i> spp.	+	
		yam	<i>Dioscorea</i> spp.	+	
<i>Sister Anne</i>	1932	bour tree	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	+	
<i>Wag-by-Wall</i>	1944	balm		+	
		borage	<i>Borago officinalis</i>	+	
		cabbage		+	
		eyebright	<i>Euphrasia officinalis</i>	+	
		hyssop	<i>Hyssopus officinalis</i>	+	
		meadowsweet		+	
		pansy		+	
		rose		+	
		sedge	<i>Cyperus</i> spp.	+	
		sundew	<i>Drosera</i> spp.	+	
		thyme		+	
		wallflower		+	

NOTES & FURTHER READING

Any exploration of Beatrix Potter's life and works should include membership in The Beatrix Potter Society. Its members are interesting and good-humored, as was Potter herself. As a group, it is welcoming and sociable, yet it holds itself to high standards. Its meetings, newsletters, and publications are informative and serious, as well as quirky in the best sense of the word. At my first conference, the first lecture I heard was by Peter Hollindale, a lecturer on Elizabethan Drama and Children's Literature from the University of York in which he introduced himself with, "My wife sometimes calls me Squirrel Nutcase." I was hooked.

To learn about Beatrix Potter, read Beatrix Potter's books. Frederick Warne & Co., now part of Penguin Random House, continues to produce lovely editions. The core of the literature about Beatrix Potter is included in the collections and published works listed in this section. The new reader might start with the biographies by Linda Lear, Judy Taylor, and Margaret Lane; the engaging collections of letters edited by Judy Taylor; and one of letters to Americans, by Jane Crowell Morse. The abbreviations of books and archival sources were adapted from the list in *Beatrix Potter: A Life in Nature* with the kind permission of Linda Lear.



Regal pelargoniums, painted at Camfield, watercolor, 1886

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN NOTES AND CITATIONS

AML	Armitt Museum and Library
ASC	Judy Taylor, <i>Beatrix Potter: Artist, Storyteller and Countrywoman</i> . London: Frederick Warne, 1986; revised edition 2002.
BPA	Jane Crowell Morse, editor. <i>Beatrix Potter's Americans: Selected Letters</i> . Boston: Horn Book, 1982.
BP/AW	Judy Taylor, Joyce Irene Whalley, Anne Stevenson Hobbs, and Elizabeth Battrick, eds. <i>Beatrix Potter, 1866–1943: The Artist and Her World</i> . London: Frederick Warne, 1987; revised edition 1995.
BP/LC	Cotsen, Margit Sperling, <i>The Beatrix Potter Collection of Lloyd Cotsen</i> . Los Angeles: Cotsen Occasional Press, 2004.
BPLN	Linda Lear, <i>Beatrix Potter: A Life in Nature</i> . New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007.
BPS	The Beatrix Potter Society, London

	(Archives on loan to V&A)
<i>BP/Scot</i>	Lynn McGeachie, <i>Beatrix Potter's Scotland</i> . Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2010.
<i>BPSN</i>	<i>The Beatrix Potter Society Journal and Newsletter</i>
<i>BPSS</i>	<i>Beatrix Potter Studies</i>
<i>BP/V&A</i>	Anne Stevenson Hobbs and Joyce Irene Whalley, <i>Beatrix Potter: The Victoria and Albert Collection</i> . London: Frederick Warne, 1985.
<i>CCP</i>	Cotsen Children's Library, Princeton University
<i>DIDJ</i>	Beatrix Potter, <i>Dear Ivy, Dear June: Letters from Beatrix Potter</i> . Toronto: Friends of the Osborne and Lillian H. Smith Collections, 1977.
<i>FF</i>	Beatrix Potter, <i>Beatrix Potter's Farming Friendship: Lake District Letters to Joseph Moscrop, 1926–1943</i> , edited by Judy Taylor. London: The Beatrix Potter Society, 1998.
<i>FLP</i>	Free Library of Philadelphia
<i>FWA</i>	Frederick Warne Archives, London
<i>HWBP</i>	<i>A History of the Writings of Beatrix Potter</i> , edited by Leslie Linder. London: Frederick Warne, 1981; revised edition, 1987.
<i>Journal</i>	Beatrix Potter, <i>The Journal of Beatrix Potter, 1881–1897</i> . Transcribed from her code writings by Leslie Linder. London: Frederick Warne, 1966; revised edition, 1989.
<i>Letters</i>	Beatrix Potter, <i>Beatrix Potter's Letters</i> . Selected by Judy Taylor. London: Frederick Warne, 1989.
<i>LPC</i>	Beatrix Potter Collection, The Linda Lear Center for Special Collections and Archives, Connecticut College
<i>LTC</i>	Beatrix Potter, <i>Letters to Children from Beatrix Potter</i> . Edited by Judy

	Taylor. London: Frederick Warne, 1992.
MY	Margaret Lane, <i>The Magic Years of Beatrix Potter</i> . London: Frederick Warne, 1978.
NT	National Trust
SIT	Judy Taylor, editor. ‘ <i>So Shall I Tell You a Story ...</i> ’: <i>Encounters with Beatrix Potter</i> . London: Frederick Warne, 1993.
TBP	Margaret Lane, <i>The Tale of Beatrix Potter</i> . London: Frederick Warne, 1946; revised edition, 1958.
TCL	Judy Taylor, editor, <i>The Choyce Letters: Beatrix Potter to Louise Choyce 1916–1943</i> . London: The Beatrix Potter Society, 1994.
TMH	John Heelis, <i>The Tale of Mrs William Heelis–Beatrix Potter</i> . Stroud, UK: Sutton Publishing, 1999.
V&A	Victoria and Albert Museum, London
VN	Eileen Jay, Mary Noble and Anne Stevenson Hobbs, <i>A Victorian Naturalist: Beatrix Potter’s Drawings from the Armit Collection</i> . London: Frederick Warne, 1992.

Preface and Germination

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8. “The flowers love”: *HWBP*, p. 312.
21. Hyacinths at No.2 are noted in a letter to Noel Moore, *LTC*, p. 38.
24. “Once when Bertram”: *Journal*, p. 16.
24. In addition to visiting the Horticultural Gardens as a child, Beatrix attended international exhibitions held there: the Fisheries exhibition of 1883, the Health exhibition of 1884, and the Inventions exhibition of 1885. Of the 1884 visit she wrote, “Band nice, food and most things related to health, very dull”: *Journal*, p. 90.
26. “When I was young”: *Letters*, p. 455.
29. “There are snowdrops”: *BP/Scot* p. 27.
29. “my unloved birthplace”: *BPA*, p. 213.
29. “beautiful, home sweet home”: *Journal*, p. 85.

30. "The Lords and Ladies": *Journal*, p. 85.
30. "There are sounds": *Journal*, pp. 93–94.
33. "I went up": Unpublished letter from Rupert to Beatrix Potter dated Dalguise 1874, V&A/LPC.
34. "all is bound up": *Journal*, p. 444.
35. "its branches resting": *Journal*, p. 445.
36. "I believe it is the fashion": *Journal*, p. 446.
36. "the memory of that home": *Journal*, p. 84.

LONDON: For more on London's squares and their place in the city's horticultural history, see *London's Pride* by Mireille Galinou (London: Anaya Books, 1990) and Todd Longstaffe-Gowan's *The London Square* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012). Victorian horticulture in general is captured in Penelope Hobhouse's "The Eclectic 19th Century," a chapter in *The Story of Gardening* (London: DK, 2002), and in Jenny Uglow's *A Little History of British Gardening* (London: Pimlico, 2005).

For more information on the Royal Horticultural Society's South Kensington Gardens, the Royal Institute of British Architects provides an illustrated article on its website, www.architecture.com.

Beatrix Potter's London can be navigated in map view in *The A to Z of Victorian London* (London Topographical Society, 1987), plates 13 and 21, and *London: A Life in Maps* by Peter Whitfield (London: The British Library, 2006). The history of South Kensington is available in the rich *Survey of London*, F. H. W. Sheppard, editor, 1975, volumes 38 (South Kensington Museums Area) and 41 (Brompton), available through British History Online.

For a study of Beatrix Potter's education, particularly the books she read and artbooks to which she referred, Linda Lear's *Beatrix Potter: A Life in Nature* (BPLN) is essential.

CAMFIELD PLACE: Beatrix Potter wrote an epistolary essay about Camfield Place around 1891. (Her grandmother, Jessie Crompton Potter, died in September of that year.) It is included in *Journal*, pp. 444–450. A chapter in *The Fairy Caravan*, "Springtime in Birds' Place," includes a detailed description of an old garden that Beatrix remembered from Camfield. Birds' Place was an old house, torn down in 1833, according to *A History of the County of Hertford*: volume 3 (1912), pp. 458–462, available through British History Online. The present owners have a map designating a field on the Camfield estate as "Birds' Place" though the vestiges of the garden described in *Caravan* are gone.

While Beatrix Potter attributed Camfield Place to Capability Brown in her journal, other corroborating documentation has not been found.

Brown's biographers, from Dorothy Stroud in 1975 to Jane Brown in 2011, exclude Camfield from his list of commissions though many other properties in Hertfordshire are included. The characteristics of the landscape at Camfield—two artificial lakes, sweeping views, grotto, summerhouses, and large scale tree plantings—are typical Brownian touches. If he did not design the property himself, he certainly influenced it.

DALGUISE HOUSE: For more on Dalguise and its surroundings, see David C. Duncan's essay "The Significance of Dalguise for Beatrix Potter," *BPSS* XI, and Lynn McGeachie's book, *Beatrix Potter's Scotland (BP/ Scot)*.

Offshoots

- 37. "I feel like a cow": *Journal*, p. 83.
- 37. "I cannot rest": *Journal*, p. 109.
- 42. "Had a series": *Journal*, p. 21.
- 43. "He came and": *BPSS* VII "Canon Rawnsley and the National Trust" by Elizabeth Battrick, p. 35.
- 44. "with its fine elms" and "the cooking": *Journal*, p. 380.
- 44. "It is the most" and "rather out of place": *Journal*, p. 222.
- 46. "With regard to ferns": *Journal*, p. 239.
- 46. "The boggy ground": *Journal*, p. 397.
- 48. "He is a perfect dragon": *Journal*, p. 305.
- 48. "His successor has": *Journal*, p. 306.
- 49. "and his judgement": *Journal*, p. 305.
- 49. "*Agaricus variabilis* is": *VN*, p. 66.
- 49. "I do not often": *Journal*, p. 421.
- 52. "I opine that". *Journal*, p. 425.
- 52. "There is no harm": *VN*, p. 108.
- 53. "I have been drawing": *LTC*, p. 100.
- 54. Beatrix Potter's handmade art folios are now housed in the rare book collection at AML.

ADOLESCENCE AND EARLY ADULTHOOD: Beatrix Potter's journal is the primary source of information on her adolescence and early adulthood. It was deciphered after years of effort by independent scholar, Leslie Linder. Among her many interests, Beatrix Potter noted plants, gardens, farms, and landscapes in her journal entries, all written in the years before she had a garden of her own.

For a discussion of the Potter family's propensity for travel and long holidays, see Judy Taylor's essay "The Potters on Holiday", *BPSS* III, pp. 41–48. The list of dates and locations assembled by Anne

Stevenson Hobbs and Joyce Irene Whalley (BP/V&A, pp. 222–229) is invaluable.

NATURAL HISTORY: The study of natural history was well established in the English marketplace of ideas by the time Beatrix started germinating fungi and searching out snails, sundews, and sea anemones. The seminal book of natural history in England is Gilbert White's *Natural History of Selborne* (London: B. White & Son, 1789). Ann B. Shteir's book, *Cultivating Women, Cultivating Science* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) explores in detail women's role in botanical studies in the years from 1760 to 1860; the epilogue, "Flora Feministica" is devoted to Beatrix Potter. *The Heyday of Natural History: 1820–1870* by Lynn Barber (London: Jonathan Cape, 1980) is a detailed and entertaining study of this popular passion. See Anne Stevenson Hobbs's essay "Flora and Fauna, Fungi and Fossils" (BP/AW, pp. 71–94).

For Unitarianism's influence on Beatrix's meticulous observations of nature, see Linda Lear, *BPLN*, pp. 41–42; it was Lear's own meticulous research that highlighted the provenance of Sowerby's *British Wild Flowers*, (*BPLN*, p. 469), which is now in the collection of Daito Bunka University's Beatrix Potter Reference Library.

FUNGI: If you are unable to visit the Armit in person, you can enjoy its extensive collection of Beatrix's drawings in the essays and reproductions published in *A Victorian Naturalist* (VN). Her curious connection with Charles McIntosh, the naturalist postman, is the subject of *A Fascinating Acquaintance*, a booklet published by the Perth & Kinross Council in 1989. Dr. W. P. K Findlay, a British mycologist, published *Wayside and Woodland Fungi* (London: Frederick Warne, 1967) using Beatrix Potter's paintings to illustrate the book. I'm sure she would have been pleased. The Linnean Society's website (www.linnean.org) includes a précis and link to Roy Watling's article "Helen Beatrix Potter: Her Interest in Fungi" (*The Linnean*, January 2000). More details on the interactions with Kew botanists and the Linnean Society may be found in Linda Lear's *BPLN*, chapter 5 "Discoveries."

Flowering

- 55. "people singing and bobbing": *Journal*, p. 435.
- 56. "not without a sense": *Journal*, p. 426.
- 56. "The only prize": *Journal*, p. 431.
- 56. "It is nearly as": *Journal*, p. 427.
- 60. "I have come": *LTC*, p. 21.
- 61. I saw a man": *BP/LC*, p. 114.

64. "They are regular vermin": *Journal*, p. 307.
65. "the rooks are": *Journal*, p. 327.
66. "several bearded horticulturists" and "their names especially": *Letters*, p. 422.
66. "Mr. McGregor was": *Journal*, p. 363.
66. "If ... [Mr. McGregor's] vegetable garden": *BP/AW*, p. 104.
67. "the rather uninteresting colour": *Letters*, p. 55.
69. "as much a manifestation": *ASC*, p. 95.
70. "rather ... trite" and "old Mrs Rabbit": *Letters*, p. 96.
71. "I cannot design": *Letters*, p. 66.
73. "I don't know": *Letters*, p. 91.
74. "I do *hate*": *Letters*, p. 121.
74. Beatrix compared herself to Jane Austen's Anne Elliot in a letter to Millie Warne, *Letters*, p. 139.
76. "The stone is": *Letters*, p. 132.
78. "I know some": *Letters*, p. 125.
78. "two-thirds surrounded": *Journal*, p. 387.

PICTURE LETTERS AND LITTLE BOOKS: Judy Taylor's book, *Letters to Children (LTC)* is a charming window into Beatrix Potter's life as it intersects with those of her young correspondents. Potter repurposed many of her picture letters into book form. Leslie Linder's detailed scholarship in *History of the Writings of Beatrix Potter (HWBP)* informs the discussions about the details of her books. Linda Lear and other scholars argue that Mr. McGregor was patterned after Charlie McIntosh; see Lear's discussion in *BPLN*, p. 86.

HOLIDAY GARDENS: Most of the gardens that the Potters would have known at their holiday addresses have been swept away but persist in period pictures. The Cotsen Collection (CCP) catalog (*BP/LC*) and its facsimile of the family's photograph album (Los Angeles: Cotsen Occasional Press, 1998) are works of art themselves as well as primary sources on the Potters and their summer gardens. The curators of the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) have paired Beatrix Potter's watercolors of gardens with her book illustrations, showing their background/foreground relationships on its website: www.vanda.org.uk.

Roots

84. "I have often": *MY*, p. 86.
84. "The garden is": *Letters*, p. 134.
88. "I believe the word": *Letters*, p. 140.
89. "I should hope": *Letters*, p. 141.

89. Beatrix invokes St. Swithin for weather prediction in *DIDJ*, p. 19 and *TCL*, p. 51.
90. Beatrix notes an old rose on the Hill Top farmhouse in a letter to Millie during the summer of 1906, unpublished.
90. "I like old": *Letters*, p. 142.
91. "I miss the sheltered": *Letters*, p. 142.
92. "they quite enjoyed": *Letters*, p. 143.
93. "a very well meant": *Letters*, p. 143.
93. "I am being inundated": *Letters*, p. 146.
93. "Mrs Satterthwaite says" and "I stole some": *Letters*, p. 149.
93. "I have got a large": *Letters*, p. 146.
94. "they say it will": *Letters*, p. 148.
94. "There's nothing like": *Letters*, p. 450.
94. "Moreover I am absorbed": *Letters*, p. 148.
96. "I think I shall attack": *Letters*, p. 146.
96. "My news is all": *Letters*, pp. 148–149.
99. "He has cut": *Letters*, p. 147.
101. Beatrix described looking out through Hill Top's wavy glass window in *LTC*, p. 124.
102. "I had a dog": *BPA*, p. 33.

BEATRIX POTTER'S GARDEN AT HILL TOP FARM: Peter Parker's article "The Gardens of Beatrix Potter" in *Hortus Revisited* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2010) is the perfect starting place. Susan Denyer's *At Home with Beatrix Potter* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2000) gives marvelous detail on Potter's projects in the garden at Hill Top Farm and later at Castle Cottage. In 2004, the Armitt Museum published a pamphlet entitled "Beatrix Potter Gardener" with text by Elizabeth Battrick.

For details about wall building and other lore of the Lakes, see William Rollinson's sumptuous *Life and Tradition in the Lake District* (Worthing, UK: Littlehampton Book Services, 1974).

THOMAS MAWSON AND THE MAWSON BROTHERS' NURSERY: Beatrix did not leave a description of her cousin Edith's garden, Brockhole, though she mentions receiving plants from those laid out by landscape designer, Thomas Mawson. The work of Thomas Mawson as well as Mawson Brothers' nursery in Windermere, frequented by Beatrix Potter, are well documented in Janet Waymark's *Thomas Mawson: Life, Gardens and Landscapes* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2009). Waymark's work adds to an earlier biography by Elizabeth Kissack, *The Life of Thomas H. Mawson*, (UK: Published by the author, 2006) as well as Mawson's classic, *The Art and Craft of Garden Making* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1901).

GARDENING AND THE ARTS & CRAFTS MOVEMENT: To appreciate the Arts & Crafts Movement as it filtered into garden design and horticulture in Beatrix Potter's day, see *The English Flower Garden*, first published by William Robinson in 1883, and the baker's dozen books on gardening subjects written by Gertrude Jekyll between 1899 and 1918. A thorough analysis of Robinson, Jekyll, and their circle may be found in Judith Tankard's *Gardens of the Arts and Crafts Movement: Reality and Imagination* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2004).

Ripening

- 105. "That's 'er 'ouse": *Letters*, p. 258.
- 106. "The place is": *Letters*, p. 161.
- 108. "I have been rolling": *TBP*, p. 110.
- 109. "my specimen of that": Letter to Fanny Cooper, 11 December 1911, [NT], LPC.
- 111. "Love in a": *Journal*, p. 156.
- 112. "What are the": *BPA*, p. 209.
- 114. Elizabeth Stevens mentioned roses and other summer flowers growing inside the box hedges at Castle Cottage in her article "A Visit to Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle" (*The Horn Book Magazine*, April 1958, pp. 131–136).
- 114. That William sometimes directed the work in the vegetable garden is documented in the National Trust Sound Archives interview with Harry and Ethel Byers who worked for the Heelises, 17 January 1991, NT.
- 114. "a regular old fashioned": *LTC*, p. 184.
- 115. "The portrait of two pigs": *Letters*, p. 214.
- 116. Mrs. Potter's garden at Lindeth Howe is described tangentially in a recommendation for her gardener, written by Beatrix after her mother's death in *Letters*, p. 357.
- 116. Beatrix's niece, Nancy Nicholson, described the carriage-drawn arrivals of Mrs. Potter in Sawrey in *TMWH*, p. 119.
- 117. "ridiculous and vulgar" and "I am perfectly ready": *TCL*, p. 11.
- 117. "I have poultry": *TCL*, p. 11.
- 119. "I have never": *TCL*, p. 17.
- 119. Beatrix wrote of collecting wild foxglove during World War I in *BPA*, p. 109
- 119. "I get up": *TCL*, p. 17.

GARDENING WITH BEATRIX POTTER: *The Choyce Letters* (*TCL*), edited by Judy Taylor, is a gift to gardeners, as it collects the correspondence from one plantophile to another. It puts one in mind of other collections such as the letters between Christopher Lloyd and Beth

Chatto (*Dear Friend and Gardener*; London: Frances Lincoln, 1998) and between Nancy Goodwin and Allen Lacy (*A Year in Our Gardens*; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000). Beatrix Potter was a careful letter writer, suiting her topics to the interests of the recipient. We learn much about Beatrix and Louie, their joint and separate horticultural efforts, and more. For example, through these letters one discovers that Louie wrote the verses for Beatrix Potter's gardening guinea pigs in *Cecily Parsley's Nursery Rhymes*. Sadly, Louie Choyce's replies were destroyed along with the most of the letters received at Castle Cottage, as was Beatrix Heelis's practice in her later years (see *Letters*, p. 449).

Setting Seed

- 123. "always very full" and "I think they": *Letters*, p. 336.
- 123. "the orchard opposite": *TCL*, p. 44.
- 124. Beatrix listed some of her apple varieties in *TCL*, p. 74.
- 124. "I have also thieved" and "hanging into the": Letter to Daisy Hammond, 22 June 1929, [V&A], LPC.
- 126. "It's called Enchanter's": *TMH*, p. 35.
- 127. "looking for all": *SIT*, p. 15.
- 128. "The familiar flower": *SIT*, p. 16.
- 128. "Thank you for": *TCL*, p. 65.
- 130. "They appreciated the": *BPA*, p. 11.
- 131. "There are other": *BPA*, p. 34.
- 131. "Through many changing": *BPA*, p. 25.
- 134. "I used a": *TCL*, p. 48.
- 134. Beatrix wrote of using chemical fertilizers, specifically ammonium sulphate in *FF*, p. 79.
- 135. "This little corner": *BPA*, p. 14.
- 136. "For, as true education": *BPA*, p. 14.
- 136. "the busy Bee": *Journal*, p. 319, footnote.
- 136. "My eccentric old": *Letters*, p. 396.
- 137. "going in for shrubs": *Letters*, p. 396.
- 138. "I should like": *Letters*, p. 396.
- 138. "anno domini": *Letters*, p. 228.
- 138. "I have failed": *Letters*, p. 398.
- 138. Delmar Banner underscored Beatrix's concern with her garden, describing her scramble out of her sickbed dishabille to pull up cabbages devastated by slugs in *SIT*, p. 49.
- 138. "I am always": *Letters*, p. 207.
- 138. The year before she died, Beatrix wrote to Joe Moscrop that weeding her garden was the best cure in *FF*, p. 80.

- 140. "And the rest": *BPA*, p. 123.
- 140. "What a pretty": *BPA*, p. 95.
- 140. "I am still": *TCL*, p. 76.

FARMING WITH BEATRIX POTTER: For a peek into Potter's world of sheep farming, peruse *Beatrix Potter's Farming Friendship (FF)*, a small volume of letters from Beatrix Potter Heelis to her master shepherd, Joseph Moscrop, edited by Judy Taylor with an essay "The Fell Farmer's Year" by Christopher Hanson-Smith (London: BPS, 1998). *The Tale of Mrs. William Heelis (TMH)* by Willie Heelis's nephew John includes a chapter entitled "Mrs. Heelis, Farmer."

Part Two Preface and Winter

- 147. "I have been sorting papers": *BPA*, p. 166.
- 148. "There has been some": *BPA*, p. 151.
- 148. "sloshy": *TCL*, p. 39.
- 148. "frost in moderation": Haggard, H. Rider *A Farmer's Year*, (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1899), p. 81.
- 151. Beatrix referred to skating on the Lakes in *LTC*, p. 188. For the freezing properties of Esthwaite, see *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, 1839, Volume 6:96, available on Google Books. For those interested in other literary connections, Wordsworth skated there as a schoolboy and described his memories poetically in "The Prelude."
- 151. "green winter": *BPA*, p. 64.
- 151. "low east": *BPA*, p. 18.
- 154. "We can tell every tree": *BPSS IX*, "Keeping the Pieces Together: the Beatrix Potter Jigsaw in the United Kingdom" by Judy Taylor, p. 26.
- 158. "pickle" used by Potter to refer to kittens: *LTC*, p. 131, and children, *BPLN*, p. 414.
- 162. "There are thousands": *BPA*, p. 56.
- 167. "I have stopped indoors": *BPA*, p. 83.
- 167. Beatrix described the lengthening days and the winter sunrise in *BPA*, p. 151.
- 167. "March has come in": *TCL*, p. 31.

Spring

- 168. "You are as": *FF*, p. 57.
- 168. "Today is mild": *FF*, p. 64.
- 170. "black thorn winter": *TCL*, p. 35.
- 171. Beatrix captured the first cuckoo call in *DIDJ*, p. 116
- 171. "It has been so dirty": *LTC*, p. 185.

172. "for the wild": *BPA*, p. 20.
172. "I am going to get some of the": *TBP*, p. 103.
175. Beatrix wrote of the many birds nesting in her garden in *DIDJ*, p. 58.
176. "single the turnips": *TCL*, p. 13.
177. "behindhand": *TCL*, p. 50.
178. "Plum blossom was": *TCL*, p. 51.
178. "They are very": *TCL*, p. 49.
178. "a lot of mischief": *LTC*, p. 201.
178. Beatrix described the sheep in the walled garden in *DIDJ*, p. 31.
178. Beatrix complained of chickens in the seed beds, including Fenella in *TCL*, p. 49.
178. Beatrix wrote of "horrid little Peter Rabbits" eating her vegetables in *DIDJ*, p. 48.
180. "When I was still": FLP Rare Book Department, letter from Marian Perry, undated.
182. "bright little beady": *LTC*, p. 176.
189. "The fruit damson": *TCL*, p. 26.
190. "like a bit of sky": *Letters*, p. 312.
191. "It will be a lovely": *BPA*, p. 35.
193. "I have just been": Letter to Millie Warne, 11 June 1910, FWA.
197. "Spring is the most beautiful": *BPA*, p. 20.

Summer

198. "Excuse a scribble": *BPA*, p. 4.
201. "I rather like spiders": *LTC*, p. 192.
206. Edith Gaddum's contribution to the garden is documented in *Letters*, p. 149.
206. "The garden here": *TCL*, pp. 71–72.
209. "And what a crop": *Letters*, p. 450.
210. "nothing more sweet": *HWBP*, p. 312.
211. "stout and active": *DIDJ*, p. 13.
213. "pushes up between": *HWBP*, p. 312.
214. "I shall plant the lilies" and "most carefully, in a": *Letters*, p. 146.
219. Beatrix's niece Nancy remembered planting water lilies with Aunt Beatrix on the tarn in *TMH*, p. 115.
219. Beatrix described planting alpine rhododendrons near the tarn, enclosing a specimen of Cornish heath in *TCL*, p. 44.
221. "I wonder what": *TCL*, p. 24.
222. "Your long-suffering aunty": *BPA*, p. 38.
222. Beatrix mentioned hay and hay making in many letters including *Letters*, p. 392.

- 222. "Four days of it": *TCL*, p. 20.
- 224. "Growing like Topsy" refers to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a book Beatrix knew from childhood and re-read in 1939: *Letters*, p. 400; *DIDJ*, p. 77.
- 224. "He has not": *TCL*, p. 62.
- 225. "an overgrown tangle": *TCL*, p. 61.
- 225. "an outfacing mess": *TCL*, p. 62.
- 225. Willow Taylor, who grew up next door to Hill Top Farm, described "scrumping" apples in the orchard in *Through the Pages of My Life* (London: BPS, 2000), p. 31.
- 228. "Specimens of scouts": *LTC*, p. 128.
- 229. "is a kindly berry, it ripens in the rain": *Journal*, p. 433.

Autumn

- 230. "Perfect autumn days": *BPA*, p. 38.
- 230. "The weather is": *Letters*, p. 149.
- 232. Beatrix noted planting acorns: *TCL*, p. 67.
- 232. "An estate should": *Letters*, 297.
- 234. "I think it is": *BPLN*, pp. 230, 500.
- 238. "believer in 'breed'": *BPA*, p. 207.
- 238. "little Baa's": *BPA*, p. 38.
- 242. "a bunch of chrysanthemums": *Journal*, 436. Uncle Harry's garden, Woodcote, is among all-things-Roscoe recorded in his autobiography *The Life & Experiences of Sir Henry Enfield Roscoe* (London: Macmillan, 1906).
- 244. "I got most of": *TCL*, p. 47.
- 244. "It is anxious work": Letter to Fanny Cooper, 5 January 1911, LPC.
- 245. "I think I will post": Letter to Millie Warne, 16 September 1909, FWA.
- 246. "What a lovely present": Letter to Charlie Cooper, 10 September 1936, NT.
- 248. "I wrote your address": *LTC*, p. 156.
- 248. Seed saving from her garden is mentioned in *LTC*, p. 156; *BPA*, p. 158; and in the memoir of Ulla Hyde Parker in *Cousin Beatie* (London: Frederick Warne, 1981), p. 13.
- 248. "carrots, onion, leeks are useful": *BPA*, p. 158.
- 252. The story of her nieces accidentally weeding her wildflower garden in the orchard is related in *TMH*, p. 125.
- 253. "the dealers are so": *BPA*, p. 62.
- 253. Beatrix mentioned Christmas tree and holly sales: *DIDJ*, p. 53.
- 253. Beatrix described wrapping the pumps for winter: *LTC*, p. 189.

Visiting Beatrix Potter's Gardens

- 260. "I was showing": *LTC*, p. 125.
- 262. "Wild flowers, water plants": *BPSN* 47, p. 8.
- 273. "the exasperation of seeing": *BPSS* IV, p. 36, "Mrs. Heelis Settles In" by Elizabeth Battrick.
- 278. "found the pleasant": *Journal*, p. 391.
- 280. "They meet and": *BPA*, p. 171.
- 280. "Peter Rabbit is not": *Letters*, p. 304.
- 285. "I have lots": *Letters*, p. 290.

TRAVELS WITH BEATRIX POTTER, ARMCHAIR AND AFOOT: There are many delightful travel guides to the Lake District, but for finding your way through Beatrix Potter's home turf none better than *Walking With Beatrix Potter* by Norman and June Buckley (London: Frances Lincoln, 2007). The Beatrix Potter Society has a beautifully illustrated and annotated map of Near Sawrey (London: BPS, 1999), available through the Society's website: www.beatrixpottersociety.org.uk. The National Trust's souvenir book *Beatrix Potter and Hill Top* by Judy Taylor (1997) provides an excellent summary of her first Lake District property. *Beatrix Potter's Lake District* by Gilly Cameron Cooper (London: Frederick Warne, 2007) is sumptuous as well as informative. Sue Tasker's *A Year in a Lake District Garden* (Ammanford, UK: Sigma Leisure, 2001) outlines the pleasures and challenges of gardening today at the Gaddums' former estate, Brockhole. The Lakeland Horticultural Society has an excellent brochure, *Guide to Holehird Gardens*, edited by Fred Dunning. A favorite book of travel essays, *The Art of Travel* by Alain de Botton (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2002), includes a selection on the Lake District. For sweet and lively concoctions about Beatrix Potter's life, see Susan Wittig Albert's eight-book mystery series, *The Cottage Tales of Beatrix Potter* (New York: Berkeley Publishing Group, 2004–2011).

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Mushrooms surrounded by woodland plants and dried leaves, watercolor, undated

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Broad beans in bud, watercolor with pen and ink, 1903

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